

THE MILITANT

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for deadly water pollution

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Ecuadoran farmers fight for land rights

BY HILDA CUZCO
AND JUAN VILLAGÓMEZ

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador—A major component of the massive protests that have shaken this Andean nation has been peasants fighting to keep their land. Many small farmers are also Indians and have been struggling against discrimination and for the recognition of their national rights.

The government of President Gustavo Noboa has pressed ahead with drastic economic austerity measures, including a new round on May 25, that have sparked further protests. They are a continuation of the economic policies carried out by his predecessor, Jamil Mahuad, who was ousted in a January 21 popular rebellion led by rural indigenous organizations.

The government's policy of "dollarization—replacing the sucre with the U.S. dollar as the official currency—is having a devastating impact on the livelihoods of working people in Ecuador. The regime has eliminated subsidies on basic goods and services, leading to brutal price increases for essentials such as gasoline. These measures hit the superexploited rural population even harder.

The government's attacks on the living standards of working people have only worsened the land crisis in Ecuador.

"The question of the land has not been

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Young Socialists map plans for summer campaigns

BY SAMANTHA KERN

NEW YORK—Over the next few weeks, members of the Young Socialists across the country will pack their bags and head for Chicago and New York, two centers for this year's socialist summer school.

Footloose YS members from Newark, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles have already agreed to move to either New York or Chicago. They will join in the weekly classes on the history of the communist movement, the effort to get the Socialist Workers presidential and vice presidential candidates on the ballot, and to build stronger YS chapters whose political activity is oriented to struggles of workers and farmers.

Some YS members will also get jobs in industry along with communist workers who carry out political work on the job and in the unions in meatpacking plants and garment factories.

The summer school centers provide a way for members of the YS from different cities to get a chance to work together politically. This helps the YS become a more cohesive, politically homogeneous national organization.

This is the third summer in a row the Young Socialists have organized a weekly schedule of classes. They are focused on the study of the victories and defeats of the

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St. Paul meat packers stage sit-down strike

Workers sign cards, first step in fight for union recognition

BY FRANCISCO PÉREZ
AND TOM FISHER

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Meat packers at the unorganized Dakota Beef plant here in South St. Paul, carried out a seven-hour sit-down strike on Thursday, June 1, to protest the speed of the production line and rising injury rate. They shut down production and won important concessions from plant management. Their action became a step toward

working together with organizers of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 to get signed cards of support for the union from every eligible worker, a necessary initial step in the fight for union recognition.

By June 6 an estimated two-thirds of the production workers at the plant had turned in cards.

The speed of the processing line has been the main issue, workers at the plant told the

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Editorial on Minnesota packing fight—see page 10

organizing a union at the plant.

Despite company efforts to intimidate the meat packers, they held firm in their refusal to work or to submit to management demands to leave the premises. Flowing from the success of their action, they are now

Labor March for Union Recognition

Join workers at Dakota Premium Processing plant in South St. Paul who are demanding recognition of their union, UFCW Local 789.

Mon. June 12, 3:30 p.m.
St. Paul, Minnesota

March from UFCW Local 789 Union Hall (Hardman Ave. N.) to the plant. Call the UFCW at (651) 451-6240 for more information.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

UMWA miners in New Mexico picket Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. Workers here and in Wyoming reject takeback demands, including 12-hour workday.

BY JACK WARD

TSE BONITO, New Mexico—Coal miners are firm and in high spirits as they enter their fourth week on strike against Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. The strikers, members of United Mine Workers of America

(UMWA) Local 1332, walked out May 15 over major concession demands. The company is seeking to attack health-care coverage, overtime pay, and pensions, as well as institute a 12-hour workday at the McKinley mine, located near Gallup, New Mexico.

Of the 387 nonmanagement employees at the mine, 311 are members of the UMWA. No one has crossed the picket line.

The mine is on the Navajo reservation, and more than 90 percent of the workers are Navajo. Pittsburg and Midway (P&M) owns mines in Alabama, New Mexico, Texas, and Wyoming. Strikers have been reinforced by the mine workers who went on strike May 28 at the company's mine in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

On June 2, 45 miners and supporters "greeted" company officials driving into the north gate of the mine for day shift. Equipped with a bullhorn and picket signs, strikers yelled, "No contract, no work," and "Are we going to win?—Yes!" Many shouted at the trucks going into the mine, "How do you like alternative scheduling?" referring to company attempts to move to a 12-hour workday. Another 15 workers picketed the south gate, along busy Route 264.

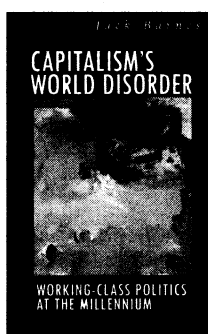
This was the third of the union's weekly Friday morning expanded picket lines.

Members of the Laborers International Union (LIU), who work for a contractor that does reclamation work at the P&M mine, joined the pickets. LIU members, who have honored the strike, have no medical benefits and earn about half as much as UMWA workers at the mine.

Other unionists from the region have of-

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FROM PATHFINDER



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Jack Barnes

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More facts on U.S. slaughter in 1990-91 Gulf War — page 9

W. Virginia strikers fight union busting by Coca-Cola bosses

BY TONY LANCASTER

ST. ALBANS, West Virginia—Thirty-eight members of Teamsters Local 505 at the Huntington Coca-Cola plant near here have been on strike for three months to secure wage rates and benefits comparable to other Coca-Cola workers in West Virginia. After rejecting a contract 38-0, pickets from the Huntington local spread out to five other plants in the state—St. Albans, Parkersburg, Clarksburg, Logan, and Bluefield. One hundred seventy-four members of Teamsters Local 175 are not crossing these picket lines.

Columnist George Hohmann commented in the *Charleston Daily Mail* that what happens in this dispute may set a precedent, pointing to the fact that Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated has 7,000 employees, of whom only 520 are union members.

Striker Bruce Adkin told the *Militant* that, as a loader, he gets \$1.50 less an hour at the Huntington plant than union workers here at St. Albans. The company justifies this by arguing that it's in a different area, although it is a 30-minute drive on the interstate highway. Adkin explained that Charleston workers can retire after 30 years of service while Huntington workers have to wait until they are 65 to get the full pension, yet they work for the same company. Coke is also proposing to hike health insurance premiums.

Workers resist strikebreaking

Workers are resisting a determined company effort to break their strike. Early on the bosses brought in a union-busting security outfit, which strikers noted was the same strikebreaking agency used during the Ravenswood Aluminum strike in the early 1990s. The company is continuing operations with scabs and management personnel. Security guards accompany scab drivers on their routes with a guard in the truck and one following. Adkin explained that strikers follow the trucks, picketing their deliveries, and explaining to the company's customers the issues in the dispute.

In one frame-up against the unionists, the company blamed strikers for shooting up a

three-truck convoy that left the St. Albans plant just outside Charleston in late March. Pickets told the *Militant* that the morning of the shooting, the delivery trucks did not go in different directions as normal but all headed in the same direction.

Teamsters Local 175 president Ken Hall said he found it "extremely odd" that the first incidence of violence in the strike "comes at a time when the company has brought in out-of-state professional strikebreakers and hired a notorious union-busting law firm."

The FBI was brought into the investigations after being contacted by the company. Lauren Steele, vice president of corporate affairs, accused the union of "a pattern of intimidation, vandalism, and threats of violence." The union responded to company efforts to use the news media against the strikers by challenging the company to a debate.

A further frame-up attempt against the workers occurred when a small grass fire at the gate to the St. Albans Coke plant was blamed on pickets. The *Charleston Gazette* reported that security guards at the plant told firefighters the blaze apparently jumped from a picket's burn barrel to a nearby pile of firewood.

Strikers told the *Militant* that pickets had damped down the fire hours before and that the company "wants something to happen," pointing out that a ruling on unemployment

benefits for members of Locals 505 and 175 is pending.

At hearings on the unemployment benefits, Coke bosses claimed that the strike is severely affecting West Virginia operations. Union lawyers pointed out that corporate officers had previously claimed the strike has had little impact. More than 90 Teamsters attended these hearings in early May.

When challenged in the court hearings on the different conditions for Huntington workers, Coke's chief negotiator said the

Huntington plant just happened to be the first place to make these changes. He added, "The days of free health care are over."

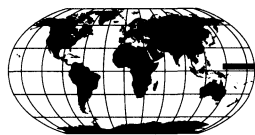
In a victory for the strikers, Judge Robert Smith ruled May 26 in favor of unemployment benefits for the Teamsters backdated to March 14, when the strike began.

Local 175 members have also been involved in a number of successful organizing drives in West Virginia. They helped secure the first contract for more than 500 workers at a hardwood factory in April.

Workers in Argentina protest austerity moves



Thousands of workers marched in Buenos Aires May 31 against austerity measures announced by President Fernando de la Rúa, including wage cuts of 12 to 15 percent for public employees, slashing pensions, and gutting health-care coverage. The unions announced a 24-hour national strike for June 9.



LABOR BRIEFS

South Korea workers strike for shorter workweek

Tens of thousands of workers in south Korea struck May 31 in support of their demands for a cut in the workweek from six days to five and a 15.2 percent wage hike. The action was organized by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, which has

590,000 members. The workers also opposed unilateral corporate restructuring and government plans to sell Daewoo Motor Co. to a foreign firm, anticipating how such moves will be used to slash jobs and wages and to worsen conditions. They also demanded rights for temporary workers. In another development, the government averted a walkout by the pilots at Korean Airlines when they acceded to the demand to allow the formation of a flight union.

Northwest attendants ratify pact

Flight attendants at Northwest Airlines ratified a new five-year contract May 30 that raises pay between 29 percent and 120 percent. According to unofficial returns, 68 percent voted to approve the agreement. The pact provides improvements in pay, pension, health benefits, and working conditions for the 11,000 flight attendants at the nation's fourth-largest airline.

Northwest flight attendants have sought a new contract since 1996, having taken severe pay cuts over the previous years. Seven years later their wages are only 3 per-

cent higher than before the cuts.

Northwest sued the union over an alleged sick-out during the Christmas-New Year's holiday week. It later fired 18 flight attendants for calling in sick and obtained a court order allowing them to search the home computer drives of some attendants. The company said that if the new agreement is ratified, it will drop this lawsuit.

Aeroméxico workers walk out

Flight attendants at the Mexican airline Aeroméxico began a strike June 1 to demand a 20 percent wage increase in face of sky-high inflation. The baggage handlers, whose union organizes 7,000 workers, also walked out after rejecting the government's pay raise offer. They also demanded a 20 percent raise.

Unionists put up red and black strike flags in 40 Aeroméxico stations and ticket offices throughout the country. Meanwhile, the government responded by taking over the administration of the airline.

—BRIAN WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

U.S. military out of Puerto Rico!

Washington's efforts to keep using the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for bombing practice is a graphic example of U.S. colonial rule. The *'Militant'* reports on this and other aspects of the rising anticolonial struggle in Puerto Rico, and how it impacts U.S. politics.

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Ontario residents rip gov't for deadly water pollution

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO—Angry residents of Walkerton, Ontario, a small town about three hours northwest of Toronto, confronted Ontario premier Michael Harris when he visited the town May 26 to inspect the public health crisis there. The crowd began to heckle him when he refused to accept that his government's cutbacks contributed to the disaster that has already killed at least seven people, including a two-year-old child and several elderly persons, and made more than 700 people ill from a deadly infection of E. Coli bacteria.

One protester pushed a placard toward Harris that read, "We Demand Answers! No More Cutbacks!"

The number affected by contamination in the town's drinking water supply is close to 15 percent of Walkerton's 5,000 residents. Eleven patients remain hospitalized in the London Health Sciences Center, and five children are on dialysis.

Harris insisted that the origin of the problem was a 1993 government decision forcing municipalities to pay for their own water testing, when the labor-backed New Democratic Party (NDP) was in office. Some participants started chanting, "Stop blaming the NDP."

Since 1995 when Harris took office, a string of further cutbacks have followed. In 1996, the Harris-led Conservative government privatized all state-run water-quality testing, closing government laboratories that once conducted an average of 400,000 drinking water tests per year.

The budget for the Ontario Ministry of the Environment was slashed from Can\$287 million six years ago to \$165 million for this year (Can\$1=US 67 cents). Some 900 out of 2,400 employees in the abatement, regional, and enforcement staff have been cut in the same period. The Harris government is close to fulfilling its stated pledge to cut "red tape" regulations by 50 percent.

Factory farms take hold

Over the past decade, intensive agriculture or factory farming has taken hold in southern Ontario, where giant feedlots for fattening hogs, cattle, and poultry are becoming the norm. To encourage this, farmers have been assured of less environmental regulation. Two years ago, farms were exempted from local bylaws and lawsuits for problems caused by runoff of animal waste, chemicals, and pesticides. Walkerton

itself has five cattle feedlots within a five-mile radius. Four of them are small, around 200 head of cattle each. One holds 2,500.

Some experts believe a large storm on May 12 may have overwhelmed some waste containment systems.

It appears, however, that many municipalities do not have the experienced staff or resources to cope with these new public health responsibilities that have fallen on their shoulders. For example, Gary Palmateer of GAP Microbial Services, a private testing lab, said his company found coliform bacteria in two of Walkerton's wells and its water distribution system on five occasions as early as January. Palmateer said he notified both municipal authorities and the Ontario Environment Ministry's Owen Sound office. Nothing was made public.

A new lab was hired in May and it reported fecal contamination in the town's water system May 18. The town's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) managers did nothing with the report for five days. The Environment Ministry was not notified. It was Dr. Murray McQuigge, medical officer for health, who announced the problem. Faced with a growing number of illnesses, he announced a boil-water warning May 21



Veronica Davidson from Walkerton, Ontario, questions state premier Michael Harris during his May 26 visit. Bacterial contamination of water supply, linked by outraged residents to privatization of water-quality testing and weakening of environmental regulation of factory farms, has left at least seven people dead and hundreds ill.

and took his own samples for testing that confirmed the water contamination. On May 23 the whole story was made public.

PUC general manager Stan Koebel gave no explanation for the failure to alert public health officers and said offhandedly that utility employees had also told him the town's chlorinators were faulty, working inconsistently, and one of them was broken and was being replaced.

Many working people are convinced that such public health disasters and breakdowns are easily preventable. But they become inevitable and cumulative consequences of the policies of the wealthy Canadian rulers, as they drive through deeper cuts in social funding, gut environmental, occupational, and health regulations and their enforcement, and remove levels of responsibility from central government oversight.

Alberta health-care strikers win pay raise

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN AND DEREK OWENS

CALGARY, Alberta—After a two-day "illegal" strike by 10,000 health-care workers in this province that attracted broad public support, the union reached a settlement with authorities that registered some gains.

The unionists are members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE). They include licensed practical nurses (LPNs), nursing attendants (NAs), and other employees at 159 hospitals and long-term care facilities across the province.

The health-care workers won pay raises of 16 percent for LPNs and 8 percent for NAs over two years, with an additional 6 percent for those with more training. The original offer by the provincial health authorities was 3 percent per year for three years.

The starting wage for a LPN rises to \$14.57 an hour, from \$12.45. With the settlement, LPN entry-level pay rates remain well

behind those in other provinces. In British Columbia, LPNs start at \$19 an hour, and in Manitoba it's \$15.20 an hour. The starting wage for a registered nurse in Alberta is \$21.54 an hour.

The union now faces a \$400,000 fine for contempt of court for organizing a strike decreed illegal—the largest penalty of its kind in Alberta history. In his comments, the presiding judge bemoaned the fact that the bosses never pressed for jailing union president Daniel MacLennan. He argued that unless severely punished, such labor defiance would spread.

The employer is also attempting to suspend union dues collection for six months, and is pursuing other court actions that could lead to decertification of the union.

"We're prepared to go to jail" rather than give up the fight, declared Veronica Archambault, a striking AUPE member at Calgary's Bethany Care Centre, which has more than 260 workers.

"In 1990, nursing attendants made \$12.35 an hour, and today they make \$12.23 an hour" said picket Laurie Miller, an LPN for 18 years at Bethany Care Centre. She added that her earnings last year were less than what she made in 1987. Strikers explained that they were fighting for across-the-board wage increases.

Bosses threaten immigrants

Strikers carried picket signs that said, "If I am of no market value, what are the residents worth?" They were responding to slanders in the big-business press implying that union members were selfishly endangering the patients' health and safety.

Bosses at the Fanning Centre threatened strikers who were immigrants with deportation if they supported the walkout.

"We'll stay out until everyone has amnesty," explained picket captain Elaine Potter. "This is a vicious attack on the union—we have to stick together," added striker Néstor Fernández. The AUPE adopted a position of total amnesty before a settlement could be reached.

A number of members of the 30,000-strong Canadian Union of Public Employees refused to cross picket lines at several Edmonton hospitals. The United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), with 17,500 members, was readying to provide support. In 1988 the UNA had defied the law for 19 days, fighting to defend health care. Strikers voted by at least 60 percent for a mediator's report.

Union officials have yet to release the vote results except to say there were at least 60 percent in favor in all four bargaining units. Many workers voiced opposition to the fact that the government had divided them into

four such units. "They have tried to weaken us by this division," added Potter. Union executives from two of the four units recommended acceptance of the settlement.

Health-care workers discussing the settlement have mixed opinions on the outcome. On the picket line, strikers expressed reservations about dropping across-the-board increases. Many believed they should have fought harder for all, while others felt this was the best offer that could be won under the threat of fines and an imposed arbitrated settlement.

"I think this is the best settlement under the conditions, but I'm not happy that the NAs didn't get as much as the LPNs," explained Potter in an interview. The NAs do many of the same jobs as the LPNs but the bosses use the excuse that they don't have as much training.

Thousands protest privatization

The health-care strike came just a month after thousands demonstrated in the streets across Alberta to protest the provincial government's passing of Bill 11, which opens the door to increased privatization of health care.

AUPE member Kathy pointed out that "Klein wanted this strike to end quickly because he may have been concerned that we would be campaigning for Medicare, not just wages." Ralph Klein is the premier of Alberta and leader of the Conservative Party in the province.

These labor mobilizations are part of a broader increase in struggles throughout the region. In March, farmers in neighboring Saskatchewan occupied the provincial legislature and organized other protests against the devastating impact of the capitalist crisis on their livelihoods.

Journalists and distribution workers at the *Calgary Herald* are in their seventh month of a strike to defend seniority rights and their right to a union itself.

Production workers at the *Herald* have now joined the picket line, after being locked out by the bosses three weeks ago. A number of them pointed to the links between the health-care workers strike and the fight to defend public health care.

Herald striker Mark, a member of the Graphic Communication International Union, explained, "It's one thing to pass Bill 11, but it's another thing to implement it. The fight is not over."

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 11 in Delta, British Columbia. Derek Owens is a member of the Young Socialists in Vancouver.

Immigrants from China deported as Ottawa debates greater powers of arrest

BY ANNETTE KOURI

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Canada's restrictive immigration policies have come into sharp focus in recent weeks.

More than 1,000 Fijian-Canadians demonstrated here May 29 demanding that the government admit Fijians as refugees. Umendra Singh explained to the press that the recent coup in Fiji has resulted in several attacks on Fijians of Indian descent.

In a related development, immigration authorities forced 90 Chinese immigrants to board an airplane destined for China May 10, the largest mass deportation in this country.

Immigration officials tried to keep the operation under wraps, but reporters noticed the heavy police presence when they arrived at the Abbotsford airport near Vancouver to cover another totally unrelated story. More than a dozen members of the Abbotsford Police Force, plus dogs, were at the airport, including its black-garbed emergency response team.

At 1:00 a.m. without warning, 9 of the migrants had been rousted from their beds at the jail in Prince George and forced on buses for the 100-mile ride to the Abbotsford airport. They had been imprisoned since arriving in Canada last summer after a long journey from China in old, rusty, crowded boats.

"These people have been incarcerated all this time and now they are forcibly repatri-

ated without the dignity of advance notice," protested Victor Wong of the Vancouver Association of Chinese Canadians. "These people are not dangerous. They are not criminals. And yet there were dozens of armed guards used in this exercise. We are shocked at the strong-arm tactics of the Canadian government."

Ever since several hundred Chinese immigrants landed on the British Columbia coast last summer asking for refugee status, they have been the object of a racist campaign. In an April 26 speech he delivered in Abbotsford as a candidate for the Canadian Conservative Alliance Party, Stockwell Day called for "asserting sovereignty and control over our national borders."

Bill would increase officials' powers

On April 6, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Elinor Caplan introduced new legislation into the House of Commons, Bill C-31. The Canadian Council for Refugees says the bill would give immigration officials new grounds for imprisoning people "based on convenience and suspicion"—for example, on the pretext of completing an examination. It would expand provisions for detention without a warrant. Anyone without identification recognized by the immigration officer can be jailed immediately. And authorities could keep them locked up for months.

YS maps out plans for summer campaigns

Continued from front page

working-class movement in the United States, the basic works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, writings of V.I. Lenin, and other books on building communist organizations. For many YS members this will be their first socialist summer school.

This summer the syllabus will feature classes on *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. One of the central themes that will run throughout the 10-week schedule of classes is how a communist party carries out its strategic orientation to the working class and functions in the trade unions to join with other vanguard workers in battles against the employers, seeking to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments of class struggle.

Classes will also be organized on *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party; *State and Revolution* by V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the Russian Revolution; *New International* no. 11; and *Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future* by Karl Marx.

The New York summer school center will be located in the headquarters of the YS National Office, which also serves as the hall for the Socialist Workers campaign and the Garment District branch of the SWP. The headquarters is located in the heart of the Manhattan garment district, where tens of thousands of workers are employed in hundreds of union and nonunion factories. Party and YS members can use the hall as a springboard from which to set up tables with Pathfinder literature and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and get into political discussions with garment and other workers in the area. Summer school participants will also join struggles going on throughout New York, from the fight to demand the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques, to joining with vanguard workers at picket lines, as well as petitioning and campaigning for the Socialist Workers candidates all over the state.

Out of Chicago, YS members will have a key roll in the ballot drives in the Midwestern states. As the brigades get out to talk with people about the socialist alternative in the 2000 elections, they will meet with farmers who are fighting to hold onto their land, or-

ganize to sell the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at mine portals and at other plant gates, and host a range of YS-sponsored activities, from fund-raising dinners to parties and campaign speaking events.

Petitioning brigades will lead the way

YS members will join and lead petitioning brigades in a number of states, which will be the real driving force of the summer schools this year. Petitioning teams are needed to get the Socialist Workers candidates for president and vice president on the ballot in 14 states and Washington, D.C. Undemocratic laws mean the socialist campaign will not be on the ballot in a majority of states.

Petitioning will begin in New Jersey and Iowa soon, and a schedule for other states, including Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and Vermont is being organized. The campaign will be launched at a kickoff event in New York the last weekend of June.

Socialist workers and YS members turn the petitioning requirements into a way to get out the socialist program and meet workers and youth interested in supporting the campaign. It is a way that many young people first learn about the Young Socialists and become interested in joining the organization. Teams will be on the streets in many cities and states where there is no organized unit of the party or YS today.

The campaign will provide the perfect opportunity to meet the hundreds and hundreds of youth and workers who are dis-



Young Socialist Ryan Lewis selling *Militant* in Harlem, New York.

Militant/Hilda Cuzco

gusted with the two capitalist parties and are excited to meet young revolutionaries through the campaign.

Active Workers Conference

YS members involved in all these activities will be building the Active Workers Conference that will take place in Oberlin, Ohio, July 27-29. The conference will be attended by workers, farmers, and youth from across the United States as well as in-

ternationally. The conference will be an opportunity to discuss world politics and the increasing resistance of the working class and its allies, as well as the progress of the summer schools and the election campaign.

Anyone interested in the socialist summer schools, the Socialist Workers campaign, or learning more about the Young Socialists can contact the YS National Office. Please call (646) 263-8974, or send an e-mail to young_socialists@hotmail.com.

Campaign fund goes over the top

BY GREG McCARTAN

By organizing socialist campaign events, talking with co-workers and union fighters, and reaching out to young people interested in a working-class alternative to the parties of big business, supporters of the Socialist Workers 2000 campaign scored a victory by going over the top in the drive to raise \$80,000 by June 4.

Becky Ellis, one of the organizers of the drive in St. Paul, Minnesota, reports that more than \$30,000 poured in the final 10 days of the fund drive and that supporters in many cities said they received larger contributions than expected.

The success of the fund means the campaign is on a solid footing for launching the Socialist Workers presidential ticket at the end of the month, starting an intensive four-month effort to present a fighting, socialist,

working-class voice in the elections.

Class-struggle events this past week confirm more than ever how important this campaign will be. And they underscore why every dollar contributed to the fund will be well spent in bringing clear explanations of the cause of the assaults by the employers and their government against working people, and the need to organize a revolutionary struggle for a workers and farmers government.

The candidates will meet and talk with workers and farmers in struggle, and spread the facts about each other's battles. The campaign will help set an example of independent working-class political action and uncompromising defense of the interests of working people around the world.

Socialist Workers campaign supporters in Houston completed their share of the

\$80,000 national campaign fund by sponsoring a rally in the new campaign headquarters on West 8th Street in the Heights area of the city.

The 25 participants heard from Dean Cook, Lea Sherman, and David Ferguson, the three Socialist Workers candidates in Texas. They described the gains made through the petitioning drive to get the names of Congressional candidates Cook and Ferguson on the ballot, and through the successful effort to win more than 50 new subscribers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in the Houston area.

Rally participants contributed \$1,525 to the national campaign fund. Of this, \$1,330 was in new contributions. During the course of the 10-week fund-raising effort, 29 Houston-area workers made contributions.

Steve Warshell from Houston contributed to this article.

Socialist Workers 2000 National Campaign \$80,000 Fund

City	Goal	Paid	%
Boston	3,750	5,075	135%
Pittsburgh	3,000	3,622	121%
Charlotte*	1,850	2,030	110%
Washington	3,800	4,067	107%
Los Angeles	6,000	6,350	106%
Houston	5,000	5,285	106%
Cleveland	2,250	2,325	103%
Allentown	1,000	1,025	103%
Des Moines	1,200	1,227	102%
Cape Girardeau	565	575	102%
Seattle	6,000	6,100	102%
Newark	4,000	4,000	100%
Philadelphia	3,000	3,000	100%
Chicago	7,000	6,870	98%
Detroit	3,000	2,930	98%
Miami	2,500	2,400	96%
Twin Cities	5,000	4,740	95%
Chippewa Falls	500	450	90%
San Francisco	7,300	6,550	90%
St. Louis	1,300	1,116	86%
Upper Manhattan	2,000	1,533	77%
Birmingham	3,500	2,590	74%
N.Y. Garment Dist.	4,000	2,805	70%
Atlanta	3,100	2,050	66%
Fort Collins	250	165	66%
Brooklyn	2,800	1,690	60%
Fresno	300	165	55%
Other		350	
Total	\$83,965	\$81,085	101%
Goal	\$80,000		

Meeting will celebrate life of John Martin, communist fighter

BY MICHAEL TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—John Moki Martin, a longtime union fighter, and for the past 17 years a member of the communist movement, died in Christchurch, New Zealand, May 25. He was 58.

John grew up in a rural, Maori, working-class community. Like many workers of his generation he began working at an early age. Although much of his working life was spent as a seasonal meat worker, he also worked many other jobs, both in Australia and New Zealand.

John soon became a union militant—one who other workers often looked to. As a partisan of the fight by the oppressed Maori nationality for their rights, he also became involved in other social and political struggles, including the movement against apartheid in South Africa.

John met the communist movement when he joined protests against the 1983 United States invasion of Grenada. He had been looking for a party that would give expression to the revolutionary, anticapitalist political conclusions he was beginning to form.

John's decision to join the communist movement posed the need to upgrade his reading skills. He enrolled in an adult literacy course, taking along a copy of *Socialist Action*—the newspaper of the Socialist Action League, which became the Communist League in the late 1980s—and ex-

plained to the teacher, "I want you to teach me to read this."

John became an avid promoter of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books to fellow workers, young people, and anyone who showed interest. He was always on the lookout for young fighters and potential revolutionaries.

In 1985 John was part of an 11-strong Workers Fact-finding Tour to Nicaragua hosted by the Sandinista Workers Federation. The tour played a prominent role in promoting solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution.

John was a footloose worker with few ties or possessions. Through a retreat of the labor movement that began in the 1980s and lasted for more than a decade, he retained a class political outlook and unswerving confidence in the capacities of working people.

As that retreat ended, John enthusiastically welcomed the new generation of workers beginning to join the fight for Maori rights, union battles, and other social struggles.

A meeting to celebrate John Martin's contribution to the communist movement will be held at the Pathfinder Press Bookshop in Christchurch at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, June 17. Messages can be e-mailed to 100035.3205@compuserve.com or faxed to (649) 358-3124. A collection will be held for the Books for Cuba fund.

Young Socialists Fund Drive March 15–June 15

City	Goal	Raised	%
Washington	200	130	65%
Miami	400	233	58%
Birmingham	450	225	50%
New York	1,000	358	36%
Detroit	550	189	34%
Seattle	350	120	34%
Chicago	800	205	26%
Newark	700	142	20%
Twin Cities	650	115	18%
Tucson	200	20	10%
Atlanta	300		0%
Cleveland	350		0%
Fort Collins	75		0%
Fresno	200		0%
Los Angeles	450		0%
Philadelphia	500		0%
Santa Cruz	250		0%
Valdosta	200		0%
San Francisco		20	
Other		100	
Total	\$7,625	\$1,757	23%

Spread news about meat packers' fight!

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Coming out of the successful international subscription drive last week, partisans of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are campaigning with the two socialist publications to spread the news of the fight by packinghouse workers for a contract and a union in St. Paul, Minnesota, along with articles about the strike by mine workers, and other labor struggles.

A special supplement of *Perspectiva Mundial* on the meatpackers fight, along with the feature coverage in the *Militant*, will be sold in working-class communities, at plant gates, and at actions involving working people across the country.

Socialist workers in New York also plan to set up a number of literature tables at this year's Puerto Rican Day parade, which is dedicated to Puerto Rican pro-independence leader Pedro Albizu Campos and will feature opposition to the U.S. Navy's continued use of the island of Vieques for naval bombardment.

In Los Angeles, *Militant* supporters will get the publications and Pathfinder books into the hands of hundreds of working people attending a June 10 event to defend immigrant rights.

In Houston and elsewhere, socialist workers and Young Socialists are making projections to follow up on new subscribers. "Two young people responded to a mailing for a Socialist Workers campaign fund event, which was held at the new Pathfinder bookstore in Houston," said Dave Ferguson. "We met one of them at a grocery store two weeks earlier."

"Our plans include resuming weekly literature tables at the University of Houston and sending a team to Pan Am University in the Rio Grande Valley," Ferguson added. "We will also get back with workers locked out by Kaiser Aluminum in Gramercy, Louisiana. They were among the 15 people who bought subscriptions to the *Militant* at a series of demonstrations and pickets held in Houston against Maxxam Corporation, the parent company of Kaiser."

Deepen new ties among fighters

The political gains from the campaign can be used to continue expanding the readership of the two publications and deepen new ties between fighting unionists, farmers, and revolutionary-minded youth.

One sales team of *Militant* supporters from Albuquerque, New Mexico, Los Angeles, and southern Illinois went to the picket lines of striking members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the McKinley mine near Gallup, New Mexico.

A previous team of socialist workers visiting the picket lines, coal portals, and going to mining communities in the region sold 70 copies of the paper and 10 subscriptions to the *Militant*. The mine is located on the Navajo reservation, and most of the workforce is Navajo.

"Strikers were eager to read the latest issue of the *Militant* that had front-page cov-

erage of their strike. They gathered in groups to check it out," wrote Carole Lesnick from Los Angeles. "We talked about issues facing strikers and our workplaces. The discussions also took up issues concerning the reservation. Miners on the picket line bought 15 copies of the paper."

Rachele Fruit, a member of the Machinists union in Miami, said she was on strike for two weeks during the subscription drive. "One of my co-workers, a mechanic who took a lot of responsibility for the picket line, bought a *Militant* subscription with his first paycheck after the strike," she said. "Since then he has attended every *Militant* Labor Forum we have organized here."

Fighting unionists subscribe

The recent subscription drive received a big boost from the rally of 8,000 UMWA members in Washington on May 17—the largest national demonstration of coal miners in many years.

Their battle to maintain guaranteed lifetime health coverage for retirees and widows reflects the stirrings of a social movement.

Rally participants purchased some 37 *Militant* subscriptions, 325 copies of the

paper, and 5 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. During the course of the drive 49 members of the UMWA purchased *Militant* subscriptions. The subs included 10 in Alabama, 8 in West Virginia, 7 in Virginia, 5 in Arizona, and several others in Illinois, Kentucky, New Mexico, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

The supporters of the sales drive met unionists engaged in other labor actions, such as the rally to support Steelworkers locked out at AK Steel. One of them renewed his subscription for one year. Members of the United Steelworkers of America bought 47 subscriptions to the *Militant* during the sales drive. Some of these subs included those purchased by workers locked out at Kaiser Aluminum and strikers at Titan Tire.

The sales campaign also involved reaching out to co-workers on the job. *Militant* supporter Al Cappe, who works on the assembly line at Ford's Ontario Truck Plant in Oakville Ontario, sold 6 *Militant* subscriptions and 1 copy of *New International* to his co-workers during the drive, as well as 1 copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and 2 copies of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolution-*

ary Armed Forces.

"I presented the subscription offer to everyone I had discussed politics with. And I tried to meet others who wanted to talk about Cuba and Elián González, the stock market and the economy, or other issues," said Cappe. "I also got some help. At a union meeting, a longtime *Militant* subscriber introduced me to a worker who had read his copy of the *Militant*. At work, another subscriber directed me to a worker who was reading his copy of the Pathfinder title *Making History*. Both workers bought subscriptions."

The sales drive went over the PM goal by nearly 20 percent. This reflected the effort to reach out to workers from other countries, many of them immigrants from Latin America, who are gaining more confidence to fight for better living and working conditions.

Sales of Pathfinder books also picked up during the drive. Socialists workers in the Garment District in Manhattan sold nearly \$900 of books and pamphlets in May, for example. Some \$230 of this was sold during the last two weeks of May off a regular table at a busy corner where thousands of garment workers pass by.

Protesters: stop execution of Gary Graham

BY LEA SHERMAN

HOUSTON—Chanting "Stop the state's killing machine" and "Free Gary Graham," 50 people rallied here May 31 to oppose the execution of Gary Graham, which is set for June 22.

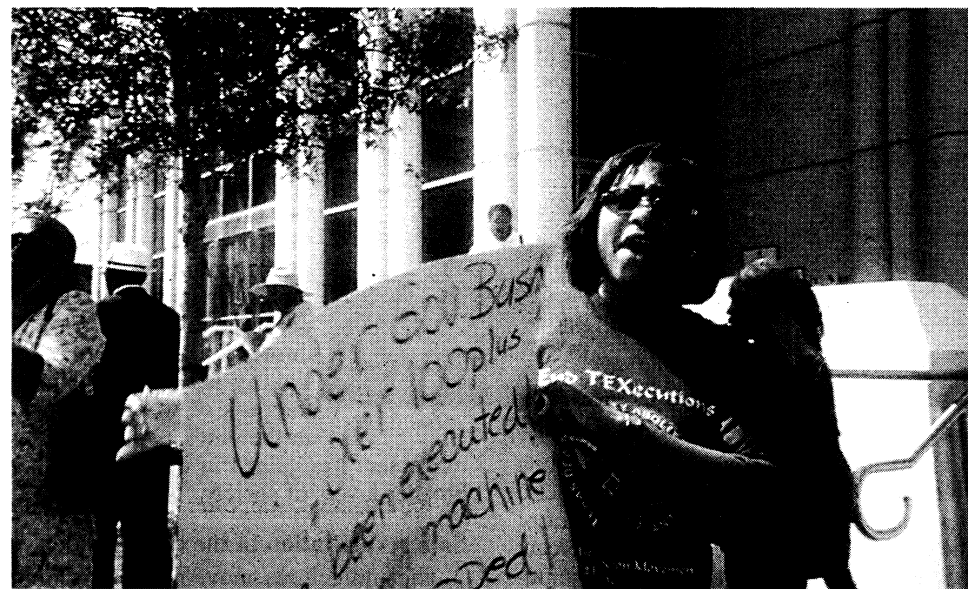
Honks and thumb-up from cars greeted the protesters, who marched in front of the courthouse. After the rally a smaller contingent began a march downtown, where three demonstrators were arrested by a large group of cops for supposedly not staying on the sidewalk. Anthony Freddie, a longtime leader of the Gary Graham Justice Coalition, condemned the arrests as a "form of intimidation."

This is the sixth execution date that has been set for Graham, 36, who is now known as Shaka Sankofa.

Nineteen years ago, at the age of 17, he was convicted of the May 1981 killing of Bobby Lambert and sentenced to death. During the two decades he has spent on death row in Texas, Graham has proclaimed his innocence and organized with family and supporters to fight his conviction.

The Black youth was convicted and sentenced to death on the testimony of one witness, who claims to have seen him at the site of the shooting in the dimly lit parking lot of a grocery store. Six eyewitnesses said he was not the gunman, and five other people placed him far from the scene. There is no physical evidence linking Graham to the murder.

Still, on May 1 the Supreme Court refused to hear his appeal for a new trial, upholding a lower court's ruling that said that the Anti-



Militant/Lea Sherman

May 31 demonstration at Houston courthouse against execution of Gary Graham

Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 applied to Graham, even though his case was on appeal before this antidemocratic law took effect. This law, enacted under the Clinton administration, cuts the appeals process short and speeds up the date of execution despite evidence that would find the accused not guilty.

Just three days later on May 4 Harris County assistant district attorney Roe Wilson asked for and received the June 22 execution date from state district judge Michael Wilkinson.

Wilson told the Houston *Chronicle*, "Le-

gally all his avenues are finished....The system has worked although he might not like the answer. The time has come for it to end."

In an interview published in the May 18 *Chronicle*, Graham stated, "June 22 is certainly on my mind. At the same time, I have tremendous faith in the brothers and sisters in the community." He added, "I'm not willing to pay a debt I do not owe. I cannot and will not cooperate with this lynching. They are going to do what they have to do. That's why I'm willing to accept gas [pepper spray]."

Prison official Larry Fitzgerald confirmed that pepper spray had been used against Graham and responded, "That's true. We did gas him. We'll probably gas him again if he continues to refuse to cooperate. That's the way the penitentiary works."

Meanwhile, defense lawyers Jack Zimmerman and Richard Burr are filing a petition for clemency with the state Board of Pardons and Paroles.

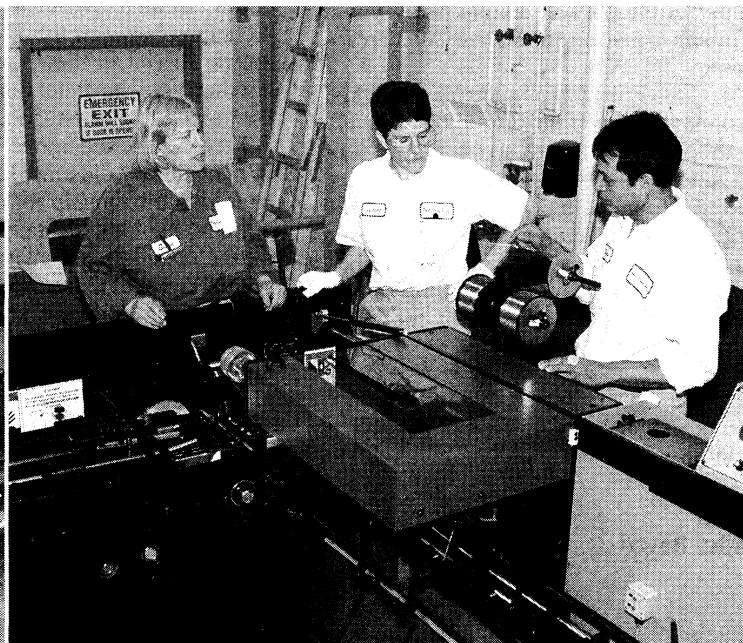
Since 1995, when George W. Bush became governor, the parole board has granted clemency only one time, rejecting 68 other petitions. During his tenure 131 prisoners have been executed—20 this year alone. The pace of executions in Texas far exceeds that of every other state.

In a politically calculated move Bush, the probable Republican presidential candidate, for the first time agreed to a 30-day reprieve for death row inmate Ricky McGinn to allow DNA retesting that could exonerate him.

The rally in Houston was one of several protests and events since Graham's execution was set, including a June 3 rally in Austin in front of the governor's mansion, three news conferences, and a moot court panel here at Texas Southern School of Law to review the evidence that the courts refused to hear. The Gary Graham Justice Coalition is planning further protests.

Lea Sherman is a meat packer in the Houston area and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate.

Pathfinder printshop upgrades, brings in new stitcher



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Left: worker removes old McCain stitcher from Pathfinder printshop, which upgraded its equipment June 6 with a new Stahl T90 stitcher, at right. This improvement was made possible by contributions to the Capital Fund. The McCain stitcher required extensive training and skill to operate. The new machine fits the shop's requirements for printing short runs of Pathfinder titles, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and other high-quality printing demands.

Rural movement in Ecuador fights for land for farmers, meeting food needs of population

Continued from front page

settled," said Pedro de la Cruz, president of the National Federation of Peasants, Indian, and Black Organizations (FENOCIN) in an interview. Land in Ecuador is concentrated in the hands of a few rich landlords. According to a report by Nina Pacari, an Indian

main points of the platform included fair access to land for all farmers, better prices for agricultural products, a priority on meeting food needs for the country's population, protection of the soil and the environment, and an increased role by peasant, Indian, and Black organizations in the implementation

has been battling. Through their struggles, "we have won some rights as indigenous peoples," he explained. "Just two years ago our language, Quichua, was finally officially recognized." There are 11 indigenous nationalities in Ecuador, many with their own languages, such as Awa, Chachi, Cofán, Epera, Huao, Manta-Huancavilca (today Spanish-speaking), Siona-Secoya, Shuar-Achuar, Tsachila, and Quichua.

Visit to cooperatives

FENOCIN activists took these reporters to two cooperatives near Guayaquil whose members told us how they have been struggling to keep their communally owned land.

Angel Chacón, member of the Monte Sinai Cooperative, a 400-hectare farm (162 acres) worked by 50 families, explained that they grow mostly corn, rice, cucumbers, watermelons, and some cotton. This co-op is part of the Union of Rice Producers of Guayas (UPAG), an affiliate of FENOCIN. Their collective efforts allow them to organize transportation to sell their produce and obtain the supplies they need for the harvest. This is a special challenge now that gasoline prices have gone up to 30,000 sucres a gallon.

"We also face another problem," said Chacón. "Because of the housing and land crisis, there are occupations by speculators who take the land of small producers and then sell it to people who are desperately in need, then leave them to their own devices after taking their money." Chacón reported they had been subjected to this phenomenon not long ago. "As you could see, at the entrance we now have a checkpoint with guards watching the land 24 hours a day." He pointed out the speculators target vulnerable peasants, not wealthy landowners.

Teresa Chacón, wife of Angel Chacón, is the vice president of a women's group on the cooperative that teaches skills such as sewing and reading and writing. It also presses the authorities to open more elementary schools in the area. The Monte Sinai cooperative is about an hour and a half away from the city, and the roads are not paved in most instances, making access to services difficult and expensive.

"What we make on the farm is not enough, so as women we have to learn skills to supplement the income of the cooperative now that everything is so expensive," she said.

In Babahoyo, capital of Los Ríos province, a three-hour drive from Guayaquil, we visited the Guareal Rice Cooperative, owned by 30 families. The 400-hectare co-op is also affiliated to UPAG, and like the Monte Sinai

it is struggling to keep from going under.

Over the past 10 years, said co-op president Víctor Ortiz, the number of cooperatives in the region shrank from 100 to 18 as production costs skyrocketed. Small farmers "have sold land to the big landowner thinking it's the best way to solve the problem of large expenses," said Ortiz. "But what happens instead is that they go from being small farmers to becoming farm workers, hired by the big ones. So we discuss this and try to convince other cooperative members not to sell their plots of land even if the price sounds right," he added.

At this cooperative the women are also taking steps to become small producers. María Solís, president of the Star of Guareal Women's Committee, is planning to raise chickens and, through FENOCIN, is trying to get a water well installed. "I've been campaigning for it for a year," she said. "The women here want to help the cooperative and also each other."

Other cooperative members are also trying to establish medical posts and schools, since they live so far from the city—almost two hours from Babahoyo. "When somebody gets sick, we have to find somebody with transportation to take the sick person to the closest hospital. Most of the time have to wait until the next day," Ortiz said.

It's conditions like these, and the growing willingness by peasants to speak out and press their demands, that has fueled the continuing mobilizations by rural toilers in Ecuador.



Militant/Hilda Cuzco
The land question in Ecuador "has not been resolved," says Pedro de la Cruz (above) of peasant and indigenous group FENOCIN. Left, Angel Chacón of the Monte Sinai Cooperative in cornfield.

of such an agrarian reform law.

Despite repression against the indigenous movement that claimed several lives, the government was finally forced to negotiate and incorporate some of CONAIE's demands. Since then, by linking its demands to the interests of working people in the cities, the indigenous

movement has gained in influence among broader layers of society.

Superexploitation in the countryside

The indigenous movement is fighting conditions of superexploitation in the countryside. In a nation of 12 million, an estimated 7 million Ecuadorans live below the official poverty level. Among peasants—almost half the population—the poverty level reaches 90 percent. One indicator of the social conditions is the fact that 80 percent of women in rural areas have barely reached elementary education or have had no education at all.

FENOCIN president De la Cruz pointed to the racist discrimination, fostered by the ruling elite, that the indigenous movement

parliamentary deputy who played a leading role in the 1994 indigenous uprising, 1.6 percent of the farms occupy 43 percent of the land in the highlands, and 3.9 percent occupy 55 percent on the coast. Communally owned lands, while legally recognized, represent only 4 percent of the land in the highlands, most of it on steep slopes that is good only for pasture.

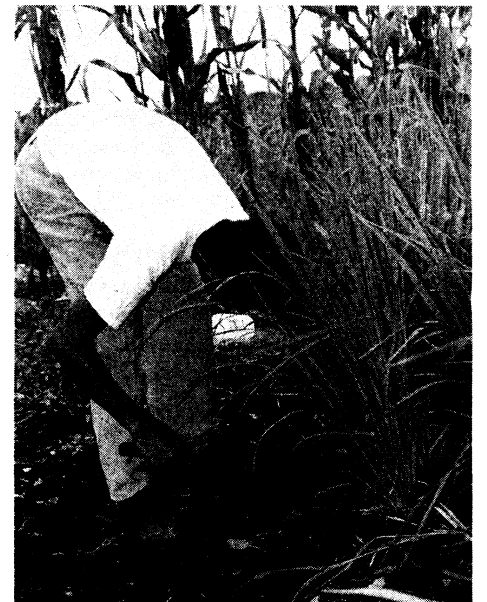
Fight for real land reform

De la Cruz said FENOCIN and other groups are fighting for a real land reform. "We want to have access to the land, marketing and technical assistance, and fair credit. Small farmers produce 60 percent of what is consumed in the country," de la Cruz noted, including potatoes, corn, barley, and other staples, while wealthy farmers produce mainly for export.

The capitalist government has carried out measures that have driven many small farmers off the land. The 1994 Agrarian Development Law approved by the government at the time called for selling off communal lands and other moves benefiting capitalist landowners and corporations.

In response, a wave of marches, rallies, roadblocks, and boycotts of markets called by Indian organizations shut down the country in June 1994. Labor unions called a general strike. In the Amazon, indigenous communities occupied oil wells in opposition to the sell-off of the state-owned oil company Petroecuador.

The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), founded in 1986, presented an alternative proposal called the "Integral Agrarian Law." The five



Militant/Hilda Cuzco
Tending rice on Guareal Cooperative, worked by 50 families. Cooperative members feel impact of high gasoline prices, land and housing crisis.

Cuba consul speaks to youth in New Zealand

BY JANET ROTH

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—A speaking tour here of María Luisa Fernández, Cuba's consul-general in Australia, gave a glimpse of the interest among many youth and others in learning about the Cuban revolution.

The Cuba Friendship Societies sponsored Fernández on her four-city visit May 17-22, arranging for her to speak before four high school classes, two university classes, three meetings at universities, and three evening public meetings. Some 450 people nationally took the opportunity to hear her.

At the Wellington public event, Fernández noted that the development of the Elián

González case did not show a lessening of Washington's aggression toward Cuba.

"The United States government agreed to return Elián to his father," she said. "But it doesn't mean it favors Cuba." She added that "relations between the U.S. and Cuba will not be solved in the short term," pointing out that "they have not done anything to lift the blockade against Cuba."

Fernández condemned Washington's use of the Cuban Adjustment Act, which facilitates U.S. citizenship for Cubans who emigrate to the United States by raft or other means outside legal channels. "This gives special rights to Cubans different from what happens to Mexicans and other immigrants. Their goal is to encourage illegal immigration in order to make propaganda, instead of giving people visas."

Earlier that day, at a meeting at Victoria University in Wellington, Fernández answered a question about Cubans living in Miami. "There is a very big community in the United States, which is divided between those who oppose relations with Cuba and those who support them."

"The ones who organize counterrevolutionary activities are a small group, mainly those who date back to the ones who left Cuba at the time of the revolution. Their activities are a source of revenue for them. Alongside them are hundreds of thousands

of Cubans who travel from the United States to Cuba, who send money to their families there, and have other links."

Fernández outlined some of the economic changes Cuba has made to confront the effects of the world economic crisis on the island, including Cuba's efforts to diversify trade, joint ventures with capitalist enterprises outside Cuba, and the development of tourism. She said these brought "ideological and social problems," but that the Cuban revolution has survived despite them and that "we cannot live in a glass bowl" isolated from the world.

One questioner at the Auckland University meeting argued that "people aren't allowed to leave Cuba." After asking him to give evidence for this assertion, Fernández explained, "In Cuba there are all types of people, including some who want to leave. The problem for those who want to leave is first finding the money for airfares. Most difficult, however, is getting a visa to enter another country. You think the Australian government, for example, will freely give visas to any Cuban who wants to leave? Ask Cubans living here or in Australia how they got here. The Cuban government did not stop them from leaving."

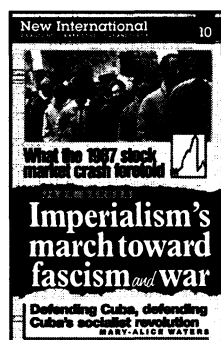
Ruth Gray and Mike Tucker contributed to this article.

From Pathfinder

in New International no. 10

- **Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War** by Jack Barnes
- **What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold**
- **Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution** by Mary-Alice Waters
- **The Curve of Capitalist Development** by Leon Trotsky \$14.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.



St. Paul meat packers stage sit-down strike

Continued from front page

Militant. The company has been on a drive to increase profits without regard for the health and safety of the meat packers. Over the last six months the line speed has increased by 40 percent. This has caused a big increase in the rate of injuries. Many of the injured are forced by the company to continue working.

Concessions won by the workers dealt with line speed and getting paid for time worked, as well as training.

Dakota Premium Foods, popularly referred to as Dakota Beef, was previously organized by the UFCW, but the company was successful in getting the union decertified there in the early 1990s.

About 175 meat packers work in the slaughterhouse, in both the cut and the kill departments. The big majority are Spanish-speaking immigrants from Latin American countries, especially Mexico. There are also a number of U.S.-born Black, Chicano, and white workers. Meat packers at the plant slaughter the cattle and cut the meat into 40- to 60-pound cuts of beef.

Slow the line

According to workers the *Militant* spoke with, the strike was prepared by a meeting in the men's locker room of the boning department the previous day. Fifty people crowded into the room at the end of the shift, as workers rounded up everyone they could push through the door. A worker from the cut climbed up on a bench and led the discussion. The workers decided to take a stand, and agreed that the following day they would come in, refuse to start work, and demand that the company slow down the speed of the line.

That night and in the morning, news of the call for the work stoppage was spread among the workers. Thursday morning they gathered in the company cafeteria.

"It was not hard to get co-workers to come," reported Amy Roberts, a worker in the packaging department. The mood was calm and patient. One striker described it saying, "You could hear a pin drop."

At the 6:30 a.m. starting time, some supervisors stormed in yelling, "You have to get to work. Don't you know what time it is? If you want to have a meeting, do it after work. Get to work now."

No one replied, and no one moved.

One supervisor informed everyone, "All those who want to work should feel free to do so."

No one moved.

Then the supervisor went with a notepad and pen in hand to each worker in the lunch room asking, "Are you ready to go to work?" Person after person said no.

One worker was sitting with his head drooping. When the supervisor poked him on the shoulder, he responded, "Don't bother me, I don't want to be woken up."

'We won't talk to this mob'

The head of personnel rushed into the room. "Do you realize you are late for work?" she yelled in Spanish. Workers said she was sweating heavily.

"Anything that you want to talk about can be taken up after work," she said. "But we will only talk to one or two workers at a time, not to this mob. We will talk like human beings."

At this point Miguel Olvera, one of the experienced cut workers got up and started to lay out the issues. He explained that the company had to turn down the line speed, that workers are getting injured. Others spoke, confirming the problem of the line speed and the injuries and giving examples.

"We are being torn apart by the line speed," Samuel Farley told the personnel director. "And we are not a mob. We are workers who want to be treated like human beings."

"It is important that we stick together," he said to his fellow workers, "and that no one go back until we talk to management and present our demands."

The personnel director threatened everyone again. "If you do not go to work it poses a serious problem."

No one left the room. No one moved. After half an hour she left.

Next the plant manager stormed in. Miguel Olvera gave an account of what hap-

pened then:

"He was out of breath, very agitated. He asked how we could do this. He said that normally people come to him when they had some need, but nobody had come to him this time. No one said anything. I stood up. The manager said, 'Do you have a problem?' I said, 'No, not me, everybody here has a problem.'"

"He said he would talk to two or three people in his office," Olvera continued. "We told him we would talk to him right then and there. He left and then came back a half hour later, and said the same thing again. I told him, 'If you didn't come to negotiate, what did you come here for? Don't play dumb.'"

Between visits from management, a petition with the main demands was drawn up and handed around. Everyone who was part of the lunchroom sit-down signed it.

The petition demanded: 1) decrease the line speed; 2) stop forcing meat packers to work their line jobs when they are injured; 3) treat workers fairly; and 4) eliminate "gang-time."

In meatpacking plants "gang-time" refers to a practice instituted by the bosses to avoid overtime pay. All workers on the line are paid by getting clocked in and out as a "gang" by the hours worked by one designated worker at the beginning of the production line. Because of this, any time worked by those further down the line, including waiting time during breakdowns, is not paid by the bosses. If workers were paid according to "straight time," as in many work situations, all the time spent at the work station after eight hours would be paid as overtime.

'Orders to fill; commitments to meet'

The personnel director reappeared. She read a statement from the company:

"It is simply not practical for us to meet with every employee to discuss issues that concern you. While we understand your concerns about hours of work and other issues, there are no easy solutions. We will talk about ways to address your concerns but we can't give you any guarantees with regard to the line speed and gang time...."

"We have orders to fill and commitments to meet. If we feel we need to hire permanent replacements to meet these commitments, we will do so. If we have hired a permanent replacement to fill your position and he is still working at the end of this work stoppage, you will not be entitled to return to work...."

"One last item: if you continue to refuse to work, you are not entitled to remain on the premises. Therefore, you must either immediately return to work or leave the building."

A discussion among the workers ensued. Some workers pointed out that they had to see the fight all the way through or they would be in a worse situation. A few began preparing to leave, picking up their tools.

Another worker proposed that no one should work until a committee selected by the workers talked to management. This was agreed to and every one remained in the room.

The company had earlier invited the workers to select one or two representatives to speak to them after work. The workers decided to accept this offer but in an altered form. Their representatives would meet with management—but there would be a number of them, and no one would go to work until the meeting had finished.

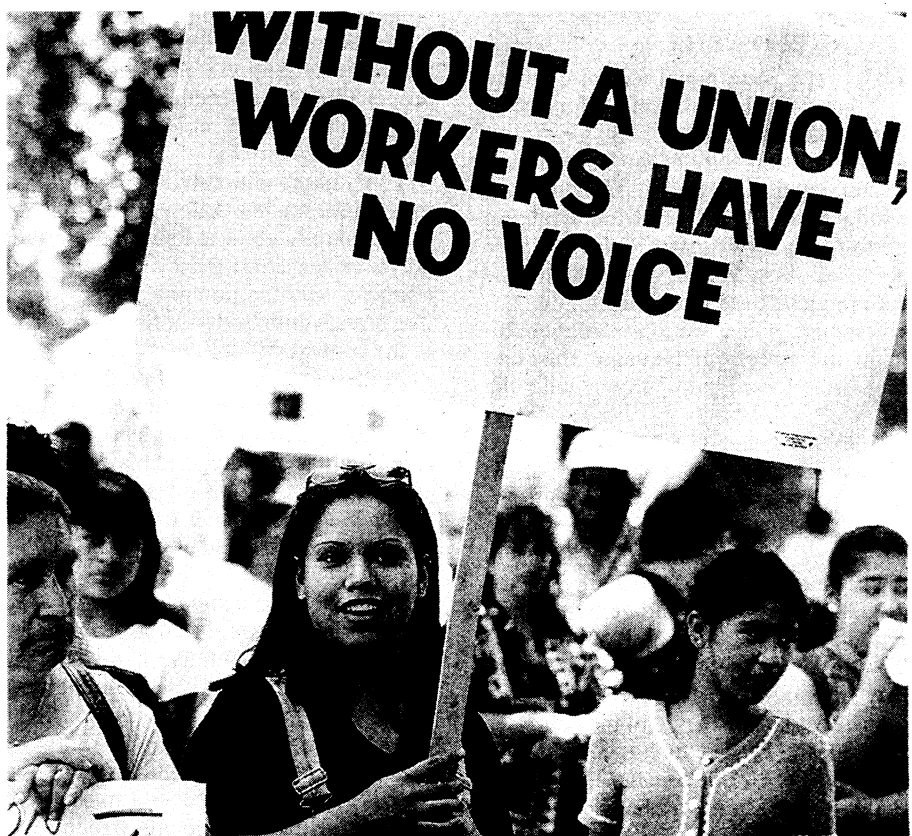
The gathering selected 14 workers, representing the different production lines in the fabrication department where the fight was concentrated.

However, the threats of the company were beginning to have a little impact. Some of the cut workers began drifting away from the cafeteria. Others organized to talk to them and they returned. There were reports that 10 or 12 workers from the kill department were working.

Written concessions

The committee of 14 workers began to meet with the company at 10:30 a.m. The meeting lasted several hours. By 1:30 p.m. management had agreed to a number of concessions. The committee insisted that the company put them in writing.

Farm workers lead march for wage raise, immigrant rights



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

United Farm Workers union led June 4 march of 3,000 people in Pasco, Washington. The demonstrators demanded wage increase for cherry pickers, who have not had a raise in 15 years, and amnesty for all undocumented workers.

The statement signed by management said:

'To All Employees'

"In accordance with the meeting held between the 12 [sic] fabrication employees representatives and company representatives the following items were agreed upon:

"1) Gang-time issues: the employees will designate an employee who will be responsible to punch a gang card. He will punch the card at an agreed upon point to begin time and also punch it at the same point to end the day. That will become the agreed upon gang time for the day.

"2) Chain speed. The same designated employee will accompany the Fabrication Superintendent to observe the changing of the line speed. It is understood that speed is dependent upon type of cattle being run and number of employees.

"3) Time cards will be figured out daily and time shown on cards, so that if any discrepancies occur, they will be addressed immediately.

"4) Previously issued 'Buddy Training System' will be reissued to everyone so they are fully aware of the way it works. [This refers to the pairing of experienced workers with new workers and the compensation they receive for training them.]

"5) Meeting with supervisors will be held today to explain issues and concerns."

Significant concessions

The concessions have real significance.

In this and other meatpacking plants, the company managers try to keep the speed of the line secret from the workers and to prevent them from having any say at all over the matter. The bosses hold as sacred their right to deepen the exploitation of the workers through the intensification of labor.

All kinds of measures like "gang-time" are used to cut into the pay of the workers as well. At Dakota Beef, for example, if workers are late for work one day, they lose their benefits for the entire week.

There was a feeling of accomplishment as the word spread about the concessions the company had made. Despite the numerous threats of the company, the workers had carried out a seven-hour strike successfully.

Based on the statement by management, the committee of 14 workers urged that everyone return to work. Confidence was high. Some, especially among the women in the packaging department, were at first reluctant to go back.

Sign union cards

By the end of the three hours of negotiations, many workers had gathered outside the plant where representatives of UFCW Local 789 were passing out union authorization cards. Workers were confidently and enthusiastically grabbing the cards to sign.

Howard Kern, who is union representative of the manufacturing division of Local

789, described to the *Militant* what had happened.

"A worker came to the union hall that Thursday morning," Kern said, "and I spoke with him in my broken Spanish. In his limited English, he got across that we should come to the plant."

"I went over there and, in the best Spanish I could, spoke with three workers. Very soon it became 10, then 25. Moments later it grew to 50, and then I found myself surrounded by 100 workers. I got a sense we have the strength to stand up for ourselves."

Some of the workers were talking about going outside to stand along Concord St., a main thoroughfare in South St. Paul that runs alongside the plant, in order to make clear to everyone passing by that a *plantón*, or sit-down strike, was taking place.

Others raised calling the press. These were tactics that had been employed to appeal for support from other working people during the recent fight—which ended in victory—to prevent the Immigration and Naturalization Service from deporting eight Mexican hotel workers who had participated in a successful union organizing drive at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel in Minneapolis.

With a victory under their belts, the workers who had carried out the disciplined action returned to work in disciplined formation, too.

Get the cards

The two days following the work stoppage, many workers in the plant were discussing the need for a union, getting more union authorization cards signed, and contacting Local 789 organizers about moving ahead with an organizing drive. At the same time, the company was working up a counterattack.

On Monday, June 5, the company called each department of the plant to the cafeteria for a separate meeting. They announced that over the next few days they would be meeting with each meat packer individually to talk to them about their work and pay.

Management stepped up their propaganda attack on the union. They told workers they would have to pay \$300 a month in union dues and that the names of every worker who signed union authorization cards would be turned over to the federal government. They threatened to eliminate the medical and other benefits of the workers if they organized a union.

That same afternoon, UFCW Local 789 invited workers at Dakota Beef to attend an open house at the union hall, located a few blocks from the factory. A number of workers in the plant, their confidence newly boosted by the strike action, began organizing other workers to go together to the hall to discuss why they needed to join together and form a union.

Once again the intimidation tactics of the

Continued on Page 10

Asylum bid for Elián González is denied

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

A U.S. appellate panel issued a ruling June 1 that denied a political asylum hearing for Cuban six-year-old Elián González, upholding the authority of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the case. The judges barred the boy from returning home to Cuba for at least 21 days to give distant relatives in Miami, who had filed the asylum request, time to appeal.

In response, half a million women mobilized in the streets of Havana, shouting "Bring back Elián" and "Down with the lies."

In late November U.S. officials turned Elián González over to the custody of his great-uncle Lázaro González in Miami after he was rescued in the Florida Straits, having survived a journey from Cuba in which his mother and 10 others drowned.

Since then, in blatant and contemptuous violation of Cuba's sovereignty, the Clinton administration has refused to simply return the boy to his country. On April 22, the government seized him in a raid of the González home in Miami by heavily armed immigration police and U.S. marshals. He is presently staying at a home in the Washington, D.C., area with his father Juan Miguel González, who came to the United States in April to reclaim his son and return home.

The three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit ruled unanimously that the INS had "considerable discretion" to determine policy in the case. The INS, wrote the judges, was not "unreasonable" in deciding that "6-year-old children lack the capacity to sign and to submit personally an application for asylum;

instead...[they] must be represented by an adult in immigration matters," and "the only proper adult to represent a 6-year-old child is the child's parent" unless special circumstances apply.

The judges indicated that while they might have made a different decision, "The case is mainly about the separation of powers under our constitutional system of government" and "in no context is the executive branch entitled to more deference than in the context of foreign affairs."

In its ruling the federal court threw in a number of gratuitous assaults on revolutionary Cuba, referring to it at least three times as a "totalitarian state" and making the false assertion that "Cuba does violate human rights and fundamental freedoms and does not guarantee the rule of law to people living in Cuba."

The panel also denied a motion that Juan Miguel González replace Lázaro González as his son's representative in the court proceedings, which would have allowed the father to drop the asylum request and return to Cuba with his son.

Meanwhile, a previous injunction by the court keeps the six-year-old in the United States during the appeals process. The judges gave the Miami relatives 14 days to appeal the ruling—shortening the period from the usual 45 days—but the injunction will not be lifted for another week.

Lázaro González has said he will appeal the ruling. Odds are against either route—



Contingent of Cuban nurses at June 2 march of half a million women demanding the immediate return of Elián González to Cuba. U.S. court ruled against asylum application filed by distant relatives, but barred his return for another three weeks.

the full circuit court panel or the U.S. Supreme Court—being successful.

President William Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno applauded the ruling.

Outside the house in Miami where Elián González lived with the Lázaro González family for five months, a few dozen opponents of the Cuban revolution showed up to protest the ruling.

In Cuba, some 500,000 women marched down Havana's coastal boulevard to the U.S. Interests Sections to protest the latest delay in returning Elián González to his country.

The next day, 70,000 people mobilized in Holguín province, in eastern Cuba, with the same demand. According to the Cuban daily *Granma*, speakers demanded "the return of Elián, the end of the Cuban Adjustment Act, and other criminal laws imposed by the U.S. government" against Cuba.

The Cuban Adjustment Act, which grants expedited citizenship to Cubans who arrive in the United States outside legal channels, is used by Washington against revolutionary Cuba, and is opposed by those who call on the U.S. government to normalize relations with Cuba.

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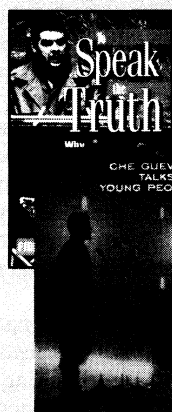
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More facts out on U.S. slaughter in Gulf

1991 massacre of thousands of fleeing Iraqi troops was part of U.S. 'total war'

"It was like going down an American highway—people were all mixed up in cars in trucks. People got out of their cars and ran away. We shot them.... The Iraqis were getting massacred."—Pfc. Charles Sheehan-Miles, describing March 2, 1991, assault on retreating Iraqi column at Rumaila, Iraq, two days after cease-fire in Gulf War.

"We've blown away a busload of kids."—Unidentified platoon sergeant during March 2 assault.

"We're yelling on the radio, 'They're firing at the prisoners! They're firing at the prisoners!'"—Specialist 4 Edward Walker, describing February 27, 1991, incident during ground invasion of Iraq.

"It's murder."—Unidentified U.S. soldier during February 27 attack.

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Washington's assault on Iraq was one of the biggest slaughters in modern history. The six-week bombardment that began in mid-January 1991 and the 100-hour ground invasion unleashed on February 24 killed an estimated 150,000 people. Millions were homeless and exposed to hunger and disease, as large sections of the country were left in ruins. The murderous effects of that war are still felt today, reinforced by the ongoing economic embargo and continued bombing attacks against Iraq.

Despite attempts by the U.S. government to lie and cover up the truth about its massacre, some of the facts have come out over the years.

An extensive article in the May 22 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine by journalist Seymour Hersh has exposed more facts about Washington's slaughter in the Arab-Persian Gulf.

Washington seized on Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 to launch a war aimed at overthrowing the Iraqi government and installing a regime subservient to U.S. imperialism. In pursuing these goals the U.S. capitalist class sought to gain an edge over its imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan, bolster its domination in the Middle East, and gain greater control over the oil reserves in the Gulf. The U.S. rulers also used the war to tighten their military encirclement of the workers state in Russia.

Washington, however, did not achieve its political aims in the region. They failed to overthrow the Iraqi government. They have proven unable to crush the Palestinian struggle for a homeland. Instead, there is more volatility and instability in the region and today the Israeli government, its junior imperialist partner in the region, has been forced out of Lebanon.

The February 1991 U.S.-led ground invasion of Iraq was a one-sided slaughter, not a war. The capitalist regime in Iraq, headed by Saddam Hussein, did not organize a fight but simply tried to maneuver with Washington. Baghdad abandoned the mass of workers and peasants in Iraq's army on the battlefield of Kuwait and southern Iraq. As these ex-soldiers tried to flee back home, the U.S. military machine simply massacred tens of thousands of human beings. The U.S. invading forces suffered barely a handful of casualties, mostly from "friendly fire."

Hersh is a liberal journalist who gained a reputation for his investigative reporting on the 1968 My Lai massacre of Vietnamese by the U.S. military. For the *New Yorker* article, more than 300 interviews were conducted with U.S. army officers in the Gulf war and army investigators.

Hersh focuses mainly on events after the cease-fire announced by U.S. president George Bush on Feb. 28, 1991, in particular the operations directed by one of the top commanders of the Gulf War, Gen. Barry McCaffrey. The article quotes U.S. army officers and soldiers who describe several instances of Iraqis being killed as they tried to flee or surrender or even after they had given themselves up as prisoners to the U.S. forces.

Hersh views these massacres simply as an "excess" of war. He doesn't challenge the premise of Washington's bipartisan assault on the Iraqi people, and so doesn't dwell much on the brutality unleashed by Washington before the February 28 cease-fire, which Bush proclaimed because he believed that by then the U.S. forces were



Destruction unleashed by U.S.-led forces on 'Highway of Death' between Kuwait City and Basra, Iraq, in February 1991. Gulf War announced future imperialist wars.

on the verge of achieving their goals.

Nonetheless, even the limited facts presented in this article are an indictment of Washington and shed light on the character of its assault.

McCaffrey, who commanded 26,000 troops of the 24th Infantry Division, drove his forces more than 200 miles into Iraq to block the retreat of Iraqi soldiers from the war zone in Kuwait. Abandoned by their military leadership, they offered no resistance.

Killing of hundreds of fleeing soldiers

"We met the enemy," recalled 1st Lt. Greg Downey, describing an encounter on February 25, the second day of the ground war. "They were a sad sight with absolutely no fight left in them." Referring to the fact their leadership had stranded them, he added, "The hate I had for any Iraqi dissipated."

After the cease-fire was declared, the retreating Iraqis had been assured safe passage. Many had thrown away their weapons. Tanks were loaded on trucks with their cannons aimed to the rear. "Some of the tanks were in travel formation, and their guns were not in any engaged position," said Sgt. Stuart Hirstein of the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion.

On March 2, deep inside Iraq, a five-mile-long retreating column of Iraqis approached the causeway across Lake Hammar, near the Rumaila oil field west of Basra. They ran into the U.S. forces McCaffrey had deployed right across the line of retreat. McCaffrey ordered a devastating attack. The U.S. military forces sealed off the causeway with Apache attack helicopters and artillery fire, pinned the Iraqi column on the road, and pounded them for five hours with wave after wave of bomb, tank, artillery, and missile attacks.

At least 400 Iraqis were killed. Some 700 Iraqi tanks, armored cars, and trucks were destroyed. Among them was a bus with civilians and children that was hit by a rocket. No shots were fired at the U.S. forces, and there were no serious U.S. combat casualties.

No reporters were allowed in the area at the time. During the Gulf War no media representatives were permitted on the battlefields without military escorts.

The massacre of unresisting Iraqis and the deaths of children deeply disturbed many U.S. soldiers. One platoon sergeant remarked, "We've blown away a busload of kids."

An officer in the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion said a captured Iraqi tank commander asked his U.S. interrogators several times, "Why are you killing us? All we were doing was going home."

U.S. slaughter of Iraqi prisoners

On February 27, the fourth day of the U.S. ground invasion, a large group of Iraqi soldiers had surrendered to a platoon in the 2-7 Battalion of the 24th Infantry Division. One of the first vehicles to pull up was a bus filled with wounded Iraqi soldiers. The

bus was marked with a crescent—the Arab equivalent of the Red Cross sign. Doctors and male nurses were among the approximately 380 prisoners.

Specialist 4 Edward Walker was ordered to blow up weapons confiscated from the Iraqi soldiers. Shortly after destroying a truck holding these weapons, the platoon was abruptly ordered to move on. The U.S. GIs, greatly outnumbered by the Iraqis, left after giving them surrender leaflets printed in Arabic. The papers promised that those who gave up would live to see their families again. Lt. Kirk Allen, the platoon commander, notified the battalion's operations headquarters of the exact location of the Iraqi hospital bus.

As the confiscated weapons were destroyed in a massive explosion, according to Walker, several U.S. Bradley vehicles, armed with chain-driven machine guns capable of firing up to a thousand rounds a minute, rolled onto the scene. The high-intensity weapons opened up.

'They knew there were prisoners there'

Walker, who was convinced all the prisoners were mowed down, said the Bradleys also fired on him and the other GIs who were in a marked Humvee. "They knew there were prisoners there. They knew they were unarmed," said Walker. "They knew the hospital bus was there, and they knew we were blowing the truck up."

Walker left the military in 1991, not permitted by the authorities at Fort Leonard Wood to reenlist after spilling the beans on the killing.

Another military engagement involving McCaffrey's troops from the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion occurred one day after the cease-fire. A ground-radar surveillance team joined a platoon of scouts who discovered a cache of Iraqi weapons at a deserted schoolhouse near Highway 8.

Steven Larimore, a sergeant who headed a brigade assigned to the platoon, said his men noticed a group of villagers walking in

the area. "One guy had a white bedsheet on a stick," Larimore stated. "Out of the blue sky, some guy from where we're sitting begins shooting" at the Iraqis. Other machine guns opened fire. In less than three or four minutes some 20 Iraqi civilians were mowed down.

Liberal reporter Hersh denounces the U.S.-organized atrocities carried out after the cease-fire under McCaffrey's command, but says little about the brutal bombing campaign and the final ground assault by the U.S. forces until then—a war that was completely bipartisan.

But the events of March 2 were a continuation of the "total war" approach unleashed by the imperialist rulers on the Iraqi people, culminating with the annihilation of tens of thousands fleeing on the highway from Kuwait City to Basra.

During this onslaught, described by pilots as a "turkey shoot," U.S. military forces bombed the front and back of Iraqi convoys, trapping thousands of vehicles in a "killing box." A reporter for the London *Independent* who visited the scene of the carnage wrote, "I lost count of the Iraqi corpses crammed into the smoldering wreckage or slumped face down in the sand."

Far from being a rogue officer, McCaffrey simply carried out the "Powell doctrine"—named for Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time—of using maximum force at the outset of a war to minimize U.S. casualties.

"Do we understand that when we use military force decisively, we are actually killing people and breaking up their equipment?" McCaffrey insisted in an interview published in the May 29 issue of *Newsweek*. "Do you understand that when you actually apply power, you don't want a fair fight?"

One fact Hersh does not report is that during the murderous Desert Storm assault, the U.S. army literally buried alive thousands of Iraqi soldiers in their trenches.

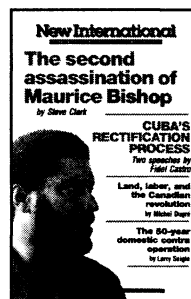
On February 24-25, 1991, three U.S. army brigades used tanks equipped with plows to fill in with sand 70 miles of six-foot-deep trenches defended by more than 8,000 Iraqi soldiers on the Saudi-Iraq border.

McCaffrey came under investigation after the war when an officer in his unit filed a complaint about his post-cessate-fire operations. Military investigators filed a secret report and exonerated McCaffrey in 1991.

McCaffrey was promoted to four-star general in 1994 and served as commander of the U.S. military forces in Latin America. President William Clinton named him White House "drug czar" two years later. Today he is directly involved in Washington's escalating military intervention in Colombia, which is being waged under the banner of fighting drug traffickers intertwined with the "fight against terrorism."

The U.S.-organized massacre in Iraq was not an aberration or an excess. It was the product of the drive by the U.S. ruling families to defend their declining capitalist world order. The Gulf War announced subsequent military assaults like the U.S.-led war against Yugoslavia.

One of the best explanations of these developments can be found in *New International* no. 7, which features the article "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," by Jack Barnes.



In *New International* no. 7

Opening Guns of World War III

JACK BARNES

The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. Also Includes "Communist policy in wartime as well as in peacetime" by Mary-Alice Waters. \$12.00

U.S. Hands Off the Mideast!

Cuba Speaks Out at the UN

FIDEL CASTRO, RICARDO ALARCÓN, INTRODUCTION BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The case against Washington's war against Iraq, as presented by the Cuban government at the United Nations. \$10.95

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Cumulative impact of fights

When workers at Dakota Beef in South St. Paul, Minnesota, organized a seven-hour sit-down strike June 1 to turn back inhuman working conditions, the bosses at first said they wouldn't talk to a "mob."

To the owners of Dakota Beef, and capitalists throughout this country, the increased resistance of workers to speedup on the line, unsafe working conditions, and low wages represents mob action against their "right" to literally turn blood and bone into increased profits under the whiplash of increasing competition.

"We have orders to fill and commitments to meet," summed up their arrogant reaction.

Fellow meat packers, garment workers, miners, and other working people who hear about what is being accomplished by the fight at Dakota Beef for decent working conditions and a union will see it differently. And they will see how shallow and temporary employer arrogance can turn out to be.

The intensification of labor in packinghouses across this country, threatening life and limb, has become notorious, especially since the mid-1980s after the owners were able to push back the union, drive through major concessions, and then take more. The bosses brought in thousands of immigrant workers, hoping to divide the workforce and weaken the union. Now they are beginning to reap the results.

The fight at Dakota Beef stands on the shoulders of other struggles by workers, working farmers, and the targets of discrimination and disrespect that for a couple years have broken out more and more often, with determination and staying power. These battles often take the rulers, and working people themselves, by surprise.

The employing class wants workers to think we are on our own each time we fight. But struggles by working people increasingly are being affected by ones that came before them, and in turn—regardless of immediate outcome—are having an impact on other fights that follow.

Examples of resistance—by coal miners, garment and textile workers, auto workers, longshoremen, steelworkers, farm workers, working farmers, opponents of police brutality, and others—are reflecting a sea change in U.S. politics and having a cumulative impact with each new battle.

On Martin Luther King Day this past January, 50,000 people, many of them Black workers, marched through the streets of Columbia, South Carolina, to demand that the Confederate battle flag be hauled down from atop the state capitol building. Encouraged by that action, dockworkers in Charleston, South Carolina, mobilized on the wharves a few days later and battled the cops to stop a scab operation in the port there.

Farmers are organizing protest actions to press their demands for debt relief and government support to fight off foreclosure and enable them to keep farming. Black farmers and their supporters have organized protests to end discriminatory practices that have forced thousands off the land. Some 3,000 farmers and their allies took part in the March 21 Rally for Rural America in Washington, D.C.

Unlike for decades past, substantial actions were organized by workers on May Day this year in Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, New York, and other cities. Those actions drew broad participation by immigrant workers bringing in their traditions of struggle—including celebrating the international workers' holiday—and strengthened a growing unity of the fighting working class in the United States.

Demonstrations organized by civil rights groups, unions, and other organizations in February and March took on Governor John Ellis Bush's "One Florida" anti-affirmative action initiative.

Working and retired miners, members of their families, and others in coal communities across the United States have been mobilizing to protect the rights of miners and their families to medical care. Capping some of the largest regional protest rallies ever seen in these communities, the miners took their protest to Washington on May 17 in an 8,000-person-strong march.

This developing social movement in the coalfields overlaps with a number of strikes and other actions by members of the United Mine Workers to defend their union. Miners in New Mexico and Wyoming are right now putting up a fight against Pittsburg and Midway Coal Company's attempts to cut medical care, pensions, and overtime pay. Over the past year other strikes by miners in Illinois and Colorado, and in the anthracite region in eastern Pennsylvania have set an example for other miners who will soon be up against the coal operators' demands.

In the Twin Cities an important fight for a new union contract is being waged by members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 17. The hotel workers already turned back an attempt by the bosses to use the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the hated *la migra*, to deport seven union militants during an earlier union organizing drive last October. As this issue of the *Militant* goes to press, hotel workers are building a June 9 rally in Minneapolis to win solidarity in anticipation of strike action to win a decent contract.

Meatpacking bosses around the country will be watching to see what happens at Dakota Beef, where workers are now trying to extend what they've won by organizing into the United Food and Commercial Workers union. At the same time, this fight provides a boost to organizing

initiatives not only in the Midwest but beyond, and in many industries.

The struggles of nonunion workers are starting to make a mark in U.S. politics, getting the attention of the bosses, and strengthening the labor movement. Recent organizing victories by Wal-Mart meat cutters, North Carolina textile workers at Kannapolis, and 74,000 home health-care workers in Los Angeles are among the examples.

While many workers at Dakota Beef are new in the plant, it should be no surprise that this is happening at a factory where the union had been organized but was driven out by the employer nearly a decade ago after failure to win a contract. It is difficult to wipe out all residue of a union in the changed conditions unfolding in this country. The experience of workers who have gone through past struggles, combined with fresh forces ready to fight, can strengthen workers' ability to stand up to management pressure and intimidation.

Workers at Dakota Beef forged solidarity among themselves. Now they need solidarity from you. Union fighters, farmers involved in struggles, youth campaigning against police brutality should get the word out about their struggle. Linking up with others, like the hotel workers in Minnesota, is also the order of the day.

One way all working-class fighters can support this and other struggles is to get around the *Militant*, as well as our sister Spanish-language monthly, *Perspectiva Mundial*. Workers in struggle, and those involved in proletarian social protest actions, find a voice in the *Militant* and *PM*.

This week's *Militant* features articles on the meat packers' struggle in Minnesota, the miners' strikes in New Mexico and Wyoming, a strike by health-care workers in the province of Alberta in Canada, the fight for a decent contract by steelworkers in Ohio, and more. From the front page features, to the weekly columns, every issue presents news of working-class struggles that can be found nowhere else.

Simultaneous with the printing of this issue of the *Militant*, a special four-page supplement to *Perspectiva Mundial* is being produced containing the front-page news article on the Dakota Beef fight along with this editorial.

The working-class resistance is also increasing interest in how the conditions workers are facing came about, how workers here and abroad are tied together, and what kind of solutions are far-reaching enough to make a difference. *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and *Capitalism's World Disorder*, two books published by Pathfinder Press, not only provide an explanation of the objective roots of the world capitalist crisis and why it is deepening, but also the quarter-century-long record of concrete experience by revolutionary-minded workers of how to organize so struggles are not lost and energies not wasted. They are of growing interest to expanding layers of vanguard workers and farmers.

The struggles of miners in the coalfields, of meat packers in the Midwest, of farmers in the South and other parts of the country, are just beginning. What the bosses think of as "a mob" are working people fighting for human dignity. And each fight is now giving us more unity and strength to challenge their exploitation and the political power that perpetuates it.

St. Paul meat packers stage sit-down strike

Continued from Page 7

company were unsuccessful. Workers at Dakota Beef told the *Militant* that almost 60 of them from the cut and packaging areas attended one meeting at the union hall, and 15 workers from the kill floor attended another.

Not surprisingly, company action to extend the hours of work prevented both cut and kill workers from getting to the union hall at the same time. But a rich discussion unfolded about why they needed a union, and a plan was adopted to rapidly gain the signatures of as many workers as possible on union authorization cards. Local 789 organizers appealed for an in-plant organizing committee, and a number of workers signed up.

Both Local 789 and workers in the fight are eager to reach out for broader community support. The UFCW local has already contacted other unions, churches with predominantly Latino congregations, immigration rights groups, and legal aid organizations in the area. Mark Anderson, a member of the staff of U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone, speaking in both English and Spanish, brought a statement of support to the workers in their fight.

According to Miguel Olvera, a number of workers have volunteered to help get community support from churches, immigrant rights organizations, farm groups, unions, and individual unionists.

In the Twin Cities area, one particularly important fight is being waged right now by workers in the hotel industry who are members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union Local 17. They are fighting for a new contract.

The hotel bosses are not budging beyond a stingy offer of a 26-cents-an-hour raise. A contract vote is being conducted June 7 and 8, and the fight appears headed for a strike. Many of these workers are immigrants as well, and

Puerto Rico and the fight for independence

Printed below are excerpts from an interview with Rafael Cancel Miranda, a longtime leader of the Puerto Rican independence struggle. The interview, conducted in July 1998, appears in the pamphlet *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*. Copyright © 1998 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA

U.S. imperialism controls our country socially, politically, and economically. We are a militarily occupied country—we're saturated by U.S. military bases. Now they want to transfer the U.S. Southern Command here from Panama. They control the mass media. They control our schools. They indoctrinate us from the time we're children. They tell you who to hate and who not to hate. They can even indoctrinate you to hate yourself.

We have to reach out to the greatest number of people with the truth and the need for independence. Independence is not simply a nice ideal. It is a necessity.

We have to reach the new generations, so they will continue the struggle until the time comes when different forces in the world come together and strengthen our struggle. We are part of the world, and what happens all over the world affects our country.

The United States uses our young people as cannon fodder in their wars. In the Vietnam War, Puerto Rico had a disproportionately high number of casualties relative to its population compared to the United States. The same thing happened in the Korean War. So young people are affected by this colonial reality.

We have to show workers why independence is in their interests as workers: so they can be the owners of their country and their factories, so they can be the owners of what they produce. So that everything doesn't end up in the coffers of Wall Street. So that it stays here for their development. We have to explain what annexation would mean. If Puerto Rico were to be made a state, they would treat us exactly like they treat our communities in New York, Connecticut, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The only defeat is when you give up, or when you believe they're so invulnerable that you can't even look at them, because you think you're going to die from just looking at them. They drum this into your head just like they did to the Indians.

Reality shatters their myths

They fill us with myths. How do we shatter these myths? Reality often takes care of that. There's the myth that you can't do anything. But in Cuba today you see those signs that say, real big, "*¡Sí se puede!*" [Yes, we can do it!] We can stand up to imperialism. In Cuba they've done it.

So far, Cuba is the only country that U.S. financial and military interests don't control.

Cuba is also a psychological weapon for our peoples, because they instill these complexes to make us think that without the Yankees we just can't survive. The sun would stop shining. The moon would fall.

For me, Cuba goes much beyond a question of economic survival. It gives you a sense of the dignity of life.

Under the system that exists in Cuba, your worth is determined by what you are. And when I talk about the system in Cuba, I'm talking about the socialist system. Your worth is measured by how you share with others. Under this system your worth is measured by what you own, and they keep us at war with each other.

Dakota Beef workers are discussing how to use their struggles to reinforce each other.

Many workers at Dakota Beef rightly feel that they are in a strong position to press their fight. A big banner in front of the plant says: NOW HIRING. There is a high turnover in the plant, and unemployment in Minnesota is relatively low.

As the company statement issued during the strike bluntly pleaded, "We hope you will respect our right to run the plant. We have orders to fill and commitments to meet." In fact, the company has more orders than it can fill.

This fight is only beginning, however. The company will likely begin its meetings with individual workers, where the managers can be expected to use threats and intimidation. In addition, in the meatpacking industry the packing bosses work closely with the police and the INS to victimize workers involved in organizing drives, as happened in Tama, Iowa, two years ago.

Workers involved in the organizing drive at Dakota Beef, however, like many thousands of others, are gaining confidence in their ability to fight off these threats.

Local 789 president William Pearson noted the significance of the strike action at Dakota Beef when he told the *Militant*, "In my 23 years in the labor movement, I have never seen anything like this.

"They went all out, conscious of the fact that they did not know whether they would have a job or not. In my opinion we can win, and we'll be getting a union contract in there."

Francisco Pérez is a union meat packer who lives in southern Minnesota. Tom Fisher is a textile worker in Minnesota.

'No contract, no work'

Continued from Page 1

ferred solidarity with the strikers.

Members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers from two nearby power plants that McKinley has contracts to sell coal to have visited the picket lines. UMW members from the Kayenta and Black Mesa mines in Arizona, the president of the New Mexico state AFL-CIO, teachers union members from Gallup, health-care workers, and iron workers from Phoenix have also walked the lines.

The local has set up a strike headquarters and bolstered the line with picket shacks at both the south and north gates. At both places, grills hold pots of strong shepherd's coffee and the tables are topped with sodas, snacks, and water.

Most strikers interviewed said P&M provoked a strike by demanding deep concessions it knew the miners would not accept. One of the main issues is P&M's attempt to begin dismantling the company's medical plan, which covers 100 percent of health-care costs for miners and their families. The company wants Native American miners to "voluntarily" opt out of the company plan and instead they will be given \$100 a month, with the suggestion they use the government health care provided under Indian Health Services. Unionists point out this second-class setup would be discriminatory.

The company also wants to move toward "alternative scheduling," instituting 12-hour shifts with rotating days off over a seven-day workweek. Under the expired contract, most miners work eight-hour shifts Monday through Friday. Only dragline operators have a rotating schedule, and all miners are paid time and a half on Saturdays and double time on Sundays. The new plan would eliminate all overtime and premium pay until after 40 hours' work.

'New plan is unsafe'

A miner's wife on the picket line pointed out, "This new plan is unsafe. Nobody can operate this giant equipment 12 hours a day and work as safely as they can in eight hours."

UMWA miners at McKinley must reach 62 to retire with a full pension and 55 for a partial pension, regardless of how many years worked at the mine. The union is demanding a retirement plan after 20 years of service and that the company contribute the same amount of money to the pension fund as do companies under the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) contract.

After a strike in the mid-1970s at the McKinley mine, P&M left the BCOA with a "verbal" agreement to keep miners' pensions on the same level as those negotiated with the BCOA.

Miners at P&M's Raton and North River mines have pensions on a par with the BCOA. The company has stated it plans to close McKinley around 2006. Under the current plan only a handful of workers would receive a full pension.

Pittsburg and Midway has hired David Smith, a notorious antiunion lawyer, to ne-

gotiate for the company at both the New Mexico and Wyoming mines. Smith was the bosses' chief negotiator during the UMW strikes against A.T. Massey Coal in 1984 and Pittston Coal in 1989.

Said striker Wilbur Willie, "David Smith is a union-buster. We don't want him out here, and we'll send him back east with his tail between his legs, like Loretta Lynn says."

Willie has 25 years at the mine and operates a dragline. He and others said this is the first time the company has hired an outside person to negotiate. Most of those interviewed expect a long strike and see this as further evidence the company is playing hardball with the union.

Miners also struck the McKinley mine in 1987 and 1995. Most unionists participated in the hard-fought 75-day strike in 1987 and the shorter two-week strike in 1995. They went through the experiences of state police violence in 1987 and the use of riot police in 1995 to try to intimidate and provoke the unionists.

The sense of confidence and camaraderie on the picket line is strong. The union was gearing up for a strike months in advance and the company is confronting a tested and united workforce.

Local union leaders visited the 110 chapters (communities) on the Navajo Nation to win support for the miners in advance. In 1987, the Navajo Tribal Council, the governing body of the Navajo Nation, sided with the company at the start of the strike.

The first negotiations since the strike began were scheduled for June 6.

UMWA strike wins support in Wyoming

BY DANNY WILSON
AND JAN MILLER

KEMMERER, Wyoming—At the picket site here strikers display homemade signs with the slogans, "Our Jobs—Our Town," "This Union is Here to Stay!" "P&M—We Won't Back Down!" and "We Will Be Here One Day Longer Than P&M!"

The strike by United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1307 against the Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co. (P&M) is solid and gaining support with no new negotiations in sight. The 230 coal miners walked out May 28, joining their sister UMW Local 1332 at P&M's McKinley mine in Tse Bonito, New Mexico. The 300 coal miners there struck two weeks earlier. Each local union has its own contract.

Pittsburg and Midway is a division of Chevron Corp. The Kemmerer mine produced nearly 4 million tons of coal last year. A majority of this supplies a power plant just a mile from the mine.

Community support for the strike is evident as one drives into the twin communities of Kemmerer and Diamondville, where many of the miners live. "We Support the UMW" signs can be seen throughout the towns—at the Ace Hardware store, the Busy

Bee Cafe, the Chevron gas station, and other small businesses. Homes in both communities sport UMW support signs in their front windows. The two communities have a combined population of 4,000.

The union has opened a strike headquarters in the old Diamondville town hall. A tent has been set up at the picket line, equipped with phones so pickets can be in direct contact with strike headquarters.

"We need all the support we can get here," stated union president Elbert Harmon. Although it's early in the strike, he pointed out, the local union has received some initial support.

Walking the picket line, miners expressed their opposition to the company's demand for a 12-hour workday, seven days a week. Under the expired contract miners work three eight-hour shifts, Monday through Friday, with overtime paid for weekend work.

The company is offering no pay raise for working miners nor a pension increase for retirees. The bosses also want to eliminate the shift differential for miners on second and third shift, and are demanding that the workers pay a portion of their medical benefits. Under the old contract miners were

covered for 100 percent of their health-care costs.

Pickets explained that not all the miners that work underground are in the union. But a number of them not in the union are walking the picket line. No one has crossed to date.

Matt Krall, an electrician at the mine for 27 years who was born and raised in Kemmerer, said he went on strike over the pension and 12-hour shift issue. He explained there is a \$24 million pension fund the company controls and that they are allowed by the government to invest the interest gained from the fund for their own needs. "The company has a no-cost issue that they won't give up. They have an overfunded pension plan that they won't relinquish control of. It's our money!" he insisted.

Krall said, "I have one thing to say to P&M: 'I value you as much as you value me.'"

Negotiations for P&M are being carried out by David Smith, a notorious antiunion lawyer. A retired miner explained, "Company negotiators used to weigh 300 pounds and carry an ax handle. Now they wear \$300 suits and carry a briefcase."

Indonesian students call for Suharto's prosecution



Students in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, demand the prosecution of former dictator Suharto on May 30. Since Suharto was forced to resign in mid-1998 amid mass protests, unionists, peasants, and fighters for democratic rights have taken advantage of the weakening of the regime to organize public protests to press their demands. The political instability is fueled by critical economic conditions and aspirations for democratic rights, including demands for national rights in East Timor, West Papua, and Aceh.

Indonesia's subordination to imperialist interests was underscored in early June when the director of the International Monetary Fund vetoed suggestions by government officials in Jakarta that they might impose capital controls to stabilize the country's currency, the rupiah.

LETTERS

'Colonias' in Texas

A small parenthetical note was added to the article under my name in the June 5 issue on the Texas Socialist Workers campaign that potentially could lead to misunderstanding. The article in question mentioned the residents living in three *colonias* on the outskirts of Rosenberg, Texas, who were engaged in a struggle to obtain clean, healthy water from the local government as well as defend themselves from developers who seek to drive them off their land.

The explanation added to the article to define the word *colonia* as "a community of makeshift dwellings" is undoubtedly a common definition of the term. However, locally many people refer to neighborhoods as colonias without intending this characterization.

In this instance, the homes built by the residents are not intended to be temporary or makeshift at all. Many are completely permanent and have been on site for more than 25 years. Some, while starting out as trailers or other mobile struc-

tures, have had rooms added on over time. A large number of the dwellings have been passed down from parents to their children on their current sites. Additionally, all the residents pay taxes on their property—most of them at rates much higher than many residents of neighboring towns.

In talking to residents, many point to the skyrocketing land prices in the area as the motive for the denial of public services and high tax rates. The local rich are well aware that if they can repossess or somehow gain ownership of the neighborhoods—legally or otherwise—the lots would sell for a handsome price after only rudimentary development.

Communities of makeshift homes are not uncommon in the Texas countryside. Shantytowns of windowless, tar paper shacks and barrios of "shotgun huts" (commonly referred to as "*mexiquito*") remain a bitter memory to Texas workers who come from rural communities and still represent daily reality for tens of thousands of im-

poverished proletarians and semiproletarians. The neighborhoods discussed in the article, however, are somewhat different.

Steve Warshell
Houston Texas

GE workers rally

About 1,000 General Electric workers and supporters held a rally in Erie, Pennsylvania, June 3 in this industrial city, the location of the world's largest manufacturer of locomotive engines. Some 3,800 workers there are represented by United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 506. GE workers represented by the International Union of Electrical Workers and the International Association of Machinists in five other states were there, joined by other unionists from Pennsylvania and Ohio. There was also a sizable contingent from R.A.G.E. (Retirees Association of General Electric). This was the latest in a series of rallies across the Midwest leading up to the June 25 expiration of the company's contract with 37,000

workers in 14 national unions. At the rally several speakers pointed to the hard line taken by the company at the current negotiations being held in New York City. The main issues for the workers are the low pensions and allowing them to retire after 30 years. GE negotiators want to have a lump sum payment instead of pay raises, increased medical payments by workers, and changes in the seniority and job classification system. The company also wants to replace the current three-year contract with one that lasts five or six years.

The next rallies are in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on June 10 and in Lynn, Massachusetts, on June 16. Henry Hillenbrand
Cleveland, Ohio

Write more about Asia

As a Sri Lankan, I know that 70 percent of the people in my country are getting less than \$2 per day. There were two insurrections against the capitalist government led by the leftist group in 1971 and 1989. Both times it came to an end

with brutal massacres. In 1989, more than 60,000 socialists were killed by the government.

Day by day people are losing their rights. The capitalist rulers have carried out a civil war against the separatists in the north and east of Sri Lanka. An unending civil war coupled with the suppression of the peoples' rights in Sri Lanka has driven the people towards separatism.

This is the wretched situation in Sri Lanka and this may be the same in India and in other South Asian countries. So, it would be better if we could have the opportunity to read more news about Asia in the *Militant*.

John Ravi
Christchurch, New Zealand

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Australia rallies protest Fiji coup

BY DOUG COOPER
AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Protests against the overthrow of the democratically elected Fiji Labour Party-led coalition government of Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry continue in major cities here. Wealthy businessman George Speight carried out a right-wing coup in Fiji May 19, and the military took over the government May 29. Fijians living in Australia, most of Indian descent, have made up the bulk of the protesters.

The demonstrators have called for the release of hostages being held by Speight's forces at the Parliament in the capital city of Suva, restoration of the Chaudhry government, and a return to the 1997 constitution. Protest leaders have tied these demands to appeals to the Australian government and the "international community" to intervene immediately and impose trade and other sanctions. This perspective has been welcomed by many but not all attending the actions.

"Please stop tinkering about. Go ahead and put the sanctions on," demanded Noor Dean, a lawyer and former Member of Parliament (MP) in the 1987 Labour-led government of Timoci Bavadra, before several hundred protesters outside Parliament in Canberra May 31.

Protest organizers met with Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and later with Labor opposition leader Kim Beazley

Support for military intervention

Some 600 people protested May 24 in front of the Sydney office of Prime Minister John Howard. Another 300 rallied in Mt. Druitt and 1,000 in Liverpool, both Sydney suburbs, May 27. Protests also took place in Melbourne. Union officials and MPs from the opposition Australian Labor Party and Australian Democrats have been prominent throughout. All have pointed to a similar campaign for Australian military intervention in East Timor in 1999 as a model.

Protesters at the Sydney and Canberra rallies welcomed Steve Baivou, a Fijian of indigenous descent, who spoke condemning the coup, the military takeover, and the Great Council of Chiefs. Answering Speight's rightist demagoguery, Baivou told the Canberra demonstrators, "Speight doesn't represent the interests of indigenous Fijians. This is not a fight of Indian against Fijian. Speight must have a strong backing at the highest level [to have gained so much political ground]. Indians are being made scapegoats to the benefit of a tiny few." Baivou also stated, "It's time to persuade the Australian government to end the rhetoric and take action."

The conservative government of John Howard has focused since May 19 on the

need for "democracy" and "stability" rather than a return of the Chaudhry government. The Australian government has announced a list of possible diplomatic, aid, trade, sporting and other sanctions if Speight and his supporters are given places in a new government.

Giving implicit support to the largely Australian-trained Fijian military, Downer told Parliament May 31, "It is important to remember that this military takeover has been in response to an extreme situation. The Fiji authorities have been under immense pressure and have been forced to take drastic action under great duress."

Meanwhile, top union officials here have tied in union-organized bans on cargo, airline flights, and mail service—in response to appeals by the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC)—with calls for a tourist boycott and for Canberra to intervene. On May 21 Sharan Burrow, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), urged Howard to give whatever assistance might be required to support the "pro-democratic movement."

"That may mean assistance from police or peacekeepers. The civilized world can't sit back," Burrow implored May 29.

By May 31 hundreds of containers carrying goods bound to or from Fiji were piled up on wharves in Australia. Two days earlier the ACTU announced it planned to extend bans into banking, universities, and sports. About 150 passengers were delayed at Sydney airport May 29, as airline workers held up an Air Pacific flight, eventually loading baggage but not mail or freight. Other flights have not been delayed, on humanitarian grounds. Officials of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Transport Workers Federation, and unions in other countries have announced similar actions.

In the immediate aftermath of the May 29 military takeover, leaders of the FTUC appealed for an international "peacekeeping" force to protect people from mobs and military forces supporting the overthrow of the Chaudhry government.

'Intervention is no good'

Not all working people support the calls for trade and other sanctions by the Australian government, much less military intervention. Sydney wharfie and Maritime Union member Joe Rossiter, much of whose extended family lives in Fiji, told the *Militant* June 2, "I disagree with what Speight has done and the way he's done it, but intervention is no good. It's better for local people to solve things. They can work it out themselves."

Rossiter slammed the "hypocrisy" of "Howard and the developed countries," say-

250,000 march for Aboriginal land rights and against racism



Militant/Doug Cooper

In the largest political turnout in Australia's history, more than 250,000 people marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge May 28 to protest the government's racist policies. The demonstrators carried flags, streamers, and balloons in the Aboriginal land rights colors, as well as union, church, and community banners voicing antiracist sentiment and support for a treaty with the Aboriginal people. A similar walk in Brisbane on June 4 drew about 50,000.

ing, "City people will always remember that wages went down to 5 cents an hour after the 1987 coups when foreign big business moved in to take advantage." Look at Iraq, Rossiter noted. "The people will suffer, not the rulers," from trade sanctions. Rossiter worried that Fijians "could turn on a peacekeeping force." At the same time, he explained that "indigenous Fijians want to maintain their connection with the land," because indigenous peoples were losing land all over the world.

The Canberra protesters welcomed comments from Anil Singh describing how his ancestors were brought from India to work in Fiji as virtual slaves cutting cane for Australian sugar giant CSR. "Now it's payback time," he said, demanding that Canberra extend visas for thousands of Fijians who fear returning home and that the doors be opened to all those who want to leave Fiji, as well as immediate and comprehensive sanctions.

Staff layoffs are expected in tourist hotels, and other businesses have told workers

to accept pay cuts of 50 percent. The garment industry, much of it Australian-owned, employs some 18,000 people and will be deeply affected by sanctions. Shortages of some food supplies and other goods are being reported in Suva.

After the Canberra rally, small knots of protesters discussed a wide range of views. Some expressed their fears that ordinary people in Fiji would suffer from sanctions. Others said the 1997 constitution was not democratic, even if it had replaced the discriminatory 1990 document. Some were deeply pessimistic about the restoration of the elected government.

Another expressed the view that professionals and others might be able to leave, but cane farmers and workers had no resources to do so. That class view was summed up in one protester's sign: "The fight for democracy has just begun."

Ron Poulsen, a leader of the Communist League and a member of the Maritime Union, told the *Militant*, "The labor movement has no more reason to tie itself to the government and the bosses on this issue than on any other."

"Given the brutal history of Australian intervention in Fiji and the fact that it remains a neocolony of Canberra" he continued, "the labor movement here should be campaigning to tell the truth about the struggle of working people in Fiji against exploitation by imperialist and local capital and the chiefly system, not pretending Canberra can do something that's not in its interests."

"No matter what the 'humanitarian' mask, Australian and other intervention will only benefit the exploiters, not the fight for political space to organize or the struggle to restore the democratically elected Chaudhry government. What Canberra should do is extend visas of Fijians in Australia, open the doors to all who are fleeing persecution, cancel Fiji's debt to Australian banks, and cut military ties now," Poulsen said.

Lars Erlandsson is a member the Food Workers Union in Stockholm. Catharina Tirsén and Anita Östling contributed to the article.

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Actions condemn racist killing in Sweden

BY LARS ERLANDSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—"We cannot accept racism in authorities and the legal system. There is not a single judge or prosecutor, who doesn't have a denigrating attitude towards ordinary people. And worst of all is their attitude towards immigrants," declared Ömer Uzel.

Uzel, a worker of Turkish origin, is fighting for justice for his son, Salih Uzel, 19, killed on New Year's Eve outside his home in Skogås, a southeast suburb of Stockholm. When his older brother and family members were attacked by a group of 15 to 18 people, he came to their aid. After the tense situation calmed down and he turned to leave, he was stabbed in the back and died in the hospital. Two racist skinheads were arrested.

A number of protests against the racist killing have been held, including two in

Skogås that drew a few hundred people, where representatives from the government, local units of the main political parties, and antiracist organizations participated. A candlelight vigil rallied 1,000 people. Another 400 demonstrated in downtown Stockholm.

The rallies condemned the killing as racist. The man charged with the killing has belonged to a couple of fascist-type organizations and is well known locally for his long record of harassing immigrants.

From the beginning the police and prosecutors have refused to acknowledge any racism in the case.

"We haven't found any signs of racism involved in this. A confrontation between two gangs led to a man being stabbed. It could have happened to any group," the prosecutor asserted. An outraged Uzel has demanded that this prosecutor be replaced,

but so far to no avail.

The 24-year-old rightist was charged with murder and has confessed to killing Salih Uzel, but maintains it wasn't his intention. At the May 9 conclusion of the trial, the judge decided that the accused will undergo a psychiatric examination and then the court will decide whether he goes to prison or to a mental institution.

"I want this condemned as a racist killing," stated Uzel. "The Swedish prime minister was recently in the United States and was commended for his work against the holocaust. But he is closing his eyes to what is happening in his own country. He should keep his own house clean."